

NAVIGATING THE SCHOOL YEAR: UPDATES AND RESOURCES

Update on the Pandemic...

The vaccine rollout is continuing, although supplies remain limited and Pennsylvania continues to struggle to distribute vaccines to those in category 1-A. The federal government is working with states and suppliers to increase the number available.

COVID cases have declined slightly over the past month, although several coronavirus variants are making their way across the nation, including Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, schools in Pennsylvania and across the nation are seeking changes in policy that would allow more widespread vaccine availability for school staff to allow schools to reopen fully for in-person instruction.

Update on Vaccines...

A virtual meeting was held at 3:00 p.m. on February 8 for PASA and representatives of several other education associations to provide an update on COVID-19 vaccinations for educators. The meeting was facilitated by the Governor's Office, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Association, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

According to the DOH, PA remains in phase 1A, which includes about 3.5 million people, and it will take more time to vaccinate those in Phase 1A before Pennsylvania can activate Phase 1B, which includes educators.

Due to limited vaccine supply and lack of information concerning future supply, it is unknown when the list of those vaccine-eligible will be expanded. While the federal government is moving to increase production, states have not received any definitive information as to when that will occur.

Read more about the [vaccination plan](#) on the DOH website. The DOH will continue to provide updates as they are available.

Concerning a suggestion to use school districts as Points of Distribution (PODs), as many have done in the past, Director Randy Padfield of Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) suggested that school district and intermediate unit officials should reach out to their County EMS to discuss the potential of arranging this option.

Guidance, Research and Other Updates...

On January 28 the PDE announced a change in the protocol to reopen schools after a COVID-19 outbreak, a protocol issued by the PA Department of Health. Specifically, the "recommendations for Pre-K to 12 schools following identification of a case or cases of COVID-19" guidance states that lengths of closure may be shortened if case investigations, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfection can be accomplished in a faster time frame. The protocol requires districts to consult the DOH or their county or municipal health department before re-

opening earlier than the time established on the reopening matrix. [Click here](#) for further information.

Research released last month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is adding fuel to the Biden administration's push for school districts to return to in-person instruction, even amid the latest wave of the pandemic. However, at least one of the new studies warns against governors' moves to restart high school indoor sports in several states. A handful of new studies add to evidence that students and teachers may

See Updates and Resources, page 9

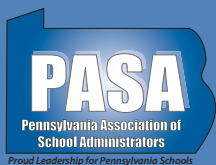
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2021-22 STATE BUDGET PLAN

Gov. Wolf unveiled his 2021-22 state budget on Feb. 4, a state spending plan that emphasizes education funding, numerous policy initiatives and a PIT increase for roughly a third of Pennsylvanians. See more information on the plan in this issue (p. 4). What does the plan mean for education? See Mark's column this month (p. 2) to learn more.

PASA is **SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR 2021-22 PRESIDENT-ELECT AND 2021-22 TREASURER**, and nominations for two seats on the AASA Governing Board. Deadline for nominations is **MARCH 12**. See page 11 for information.



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Please report your appointments, renewals, awards or special achievements, or that of others in your region to **Barbara Jewett** at PASA either by phone (717) 540-4448, by fax (717) 540-4405, or via email at pasa@pasa-net.org. Copy deadline is the 1st of each month.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DR. MARK DIROCCO

THE GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC BUDGET PROPOSAL



The Governor has proposed a historic 2021-2022 budget with an aggressive increase to education funding. The Governor's budget proposal injects \$1.35 billion into the Basic Education Subsidy (BEF) to establish a more equitable base for public school funding in the future without reducing funds for any school district. The plan highlights the magnitude of the state's inequity and underfunding of public education in Pennsylvania.

PASA has long held the position that the inequity in our basic subsidy funding system must be addressed without harming **any** school district. We support a more equitable distribution of BEF funds to provide needed funds to severely underfunded districts. The Governor's proposal redistributes BEF dollars through the Fair Funding Formula with an additional allotment to some districts, ensuring that no district will receive a cut in subsidy dollars while it creates greater equity in the distribution of state dollars to school districts.

The long-standing issue of inequity in the Pennsylvania School Funding System has been problematic for years. From 1992 to 2016, Pennsylvania lacked an official public school funding system. Yearly BEF was based upon what a district received the previous year with some additional dollars added. This has been referred to as "hold harmless." Unfortunately, this process did not consider decreases or increases in student enrollment.

Furthermore, many districts have experienced increases in student demographics, including students living in poverty, special education students, English Language Learners, and other factors that create additional costs to educate children. Some districts that have experienced a decline in student enrollment may have seen their overall expenses rise due to significant increases in these categories of student population and other mandated costs. Growing districts have not been adequately compensated for their increased population. Consequently, significant inequities have been created over time, resulting in many districts relying on local property taxes to make up the difference for the lack of funding by the state.

The General Assembly worked in a bipartisan manner to develop the Fair Funding Formula that was implemented in 2016. This formula considers the many variables described in the previous paragraph to disburse funds to districts based on actual need. Since its implementation, new BEF dollars have been run through the formula, providing districts with a more equitable distribution of funds. Although the formula was never designed to allocate all BEF dollars, only about 11% of BEF funds are currently running through the formula, a situation that leaves huge gaps in funding. These gaps are often found in school districts with the highest levels of poverty and students of color.

The inequity of our state education funding system can no longer be overlooked, and I applaud the Governor for starting the conversation to establish a more equitable funding system.

Other aspects of the Governor's budget proposal are similarly bold, including a \$200 million increase in special education funding that is desperately needed after years of inadequate funding by the state and federal government. His proposed changes to the charter school law will result in \$229 million in savings for school districts by accomplishing the following:

- establish performance standards that hold charter schools accountable for the educational outcomes of students and a moratorium on new cyber charter schools;
- cap student enrollment in low performing cyber charter schools until outcomes improve;
- require charter management companies be subject to the Right to Know Act, State Ethics Act, and post employee salaries on PDE's website similar to requirements for public school districts; and
- create fair, predictable, and equitable funding for school districts, including in the areas of special education funding and cyber charter tuition payments.

Whether or not these bold proposals will cross the finish line remains to be seen. The leadership of the House and Senate have already declared that the Governor's budget proposal is dead on arrival. To complicate matters, school districts will be receiving significant federal stimulus dollars that some policymakers may want to factor into the state budget equation.

See Executive Director's Message, page 3



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.

In Budget & Finance News

Proposed 2021-22 Budget: Gov. Wolf this month released his 2021-22 budget plan, that includes significant increases for education, many policy initiatives affecting education, and an increase in the PIT. (See page 4 for more.)

State Revenue: Pennsylvania collected \$2.7 billion in General Fund revenue in January, which was \$162.4 million, or 5.8 percent, less than anticipated. Fiscal year-to-date General Fund collections total \$21.2 billion, which is \$307.4 million, or 1.5 percent, above estimate.

Economic Outlook: Last month the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released an updated report on the commonwealth's economic and budget outlook for 2020-21 to 2025-26. Overall, the IFO is estimating a \$2 billion structural deficit, with some permanent job loss anticipated, and that those job losses (wages paid and payroll jobs) will mean lower economic growth for revenues and therefore a higher structural deficit. Generally, the IFO projects an ending balance of \$1.5 billion in 2020-21 and operating deficits in future years.

Legislative News

Session Schedule: The House and Senate will have limited session days from now until mid-March, as appropriations committees in both chambers conduct hearings on Gov. Wolf's 2021-22 proposed state budget. Education hearings are scheduled for March 1 in the House and March 18 in the Senate.

Declaration of Emergency: With strictly partisan votes and all Democrats opposed, the House and Senate passed a joint resolution to amend the Constitution by limiting a governor's authority to issue a declaration of emergency to 21 days, after which the legislature would need to approve its continuance with a 2/3 vote. The measure will need to go to voters this May.

Disbursing COVID-Relief Funds: The legislature passed and Gov. Wolf signed into law this month SB 2, a Fiscal Code bill which authorizes distribution of federal GEER funds to CT schools, intermediate units, approved private schools and the PASSHE system, as well as state grants to small businesses.

Special Election: Two special elections this spring will coincide with the May primary to fill the legislative seats formerly held by the late Sen. David Arnold (R-Lebanon) and the late Rep. Mike Reese (Westmoreland).

State News

Release of COVID Funds: The PDE last month announced the Pennsylvania Department of Education will grant \$2.2 billion in ESSER II Fund awards to school districts and charters schools based on their proportionate share of the Title I-A (FY 2020) formula. Local education agencies (LEAs) can apply to PDE through the eGrants system to receive their allocation of the funding. Information is available on the [PDE website](http://www.pde.pa.gov).

DOH Leadership Changes: President Joe Biden picked Dr. Rachel Levine, former PA Secretary of Health, to be his assistant secretary of health. To replace her, Gov. Wolf has nominated Alison Beam to

the position. Beam, now acting Secretary of the PA Department of Health, had been serving as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, with a focus on coordinating policy development and communications with the DOH and departments of human services, aging and insurance. The governor also named Dr. Wendy Braund, formerly the COVID-19 Response Director of the DOH, as interim Acting Physician General.

National News

Executive Order: President Biden last month revoked an executive order from the previous administration that created the 1776 Commission to promote "patriotic education" in schools and elsewhere. Historians criticized a report issued by the commission on January 18 for how it treated slavery and other elements of American history.

Chance-for-Success-Index: According to *Education Week's* annual "Chance-for-Success Index," the nation has made notable gains over the past decade on a wide-ranging basket of academic and socioeconomic factors, earning it the first B- grade on the index in its current form since 2008. Pennsylvania earned a "B" in the report.

Use of E-Rate Funds: The FCC is formally [requesting comments](#) on expanding the E-Rate program to help school districts more comprehensively address the digital divide. Equity also is a focus of the request for comments.

COMING UP

General Assembly leadership and committees are in place and have already been active at the start of the 2021-22 session. Pandemic-related and now state budget issues are dominating legislative activity and are expected to do so through the spring and early summer. Concerns about the vaccine roll-out, anticipation of more federal relief, the high cost of cyber school tuition, and concerns about required assessments continue to dominate the attention of school administrators and many lawmakers. Meanwhile, Republicans had less than a positive response to Gov. Wolf's proposed budget plan, particularly his proposed PIT increase to pay for increased school funding, and that reaction will no doubt dominate appropriations hearings the next two months. It will be an interesting spring. Stay tuned for the latest information by following us on **Twitter** @PASASupts.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

continued from page 2

Many people simply do not understand the increased expenses that districts have incurred because of COVID-19 and that one-time stimulus dollars, no matter how large, will not offset ongoing mandated expenses. I encourage all school leaders to tell your story to your stakeholders so they understand that federal stimulus dollars will not help districts with exploding costs for special education, ELL programs, charter school tuition, PSERS and other mandated programs that are recurring, yearly expenses.

We have a historic budget proposal from the Governor, historic federal stimulus dollars on the way, and the unknown expenses of navigating a historic pandemic into the future. Another year of level funding would be devastating. Now is the time to advocate for the children you serve and all the children of the Commonwealth to establish a better financial structure for the future of public education.

GOV. WOLF UNVEILS PROPOSED 2021-22 STATE BUDGET

Gov. Wolf this month released his proposed state budget for FY 2021-22, an ambitious plan that includes significant funding increases for education, workforce investments, and post-pandemic business supports.

The plan also calls for numerous policy initiatives, some of which he has proposed before, including reforming the charter school law and the EITC and OITC programs, legalizing recreational-use marijuana, increasing the statewide minimum wage and establishing a minimum teacher starting salary, enacting campaign and electoral reforms, and investing in public infrastructure.

[Click here](#) for links to budget documents, including district-by-district appropriations.

Education Funding and Policy

Gov. Wolf's proposal includes a significant investment in public education, including a more than \$1.3 billion investment in basic education funding, directing all existing state-level basic education funding through the Fair Funding Formula and including a \$1.15 billion adjustment so that no school district is negatively affected.

The governor also proposes an additional \$200 million investment in basic education funding to allow all districts to continue to invest in student achievement. These dollars also would be run through the fair funding formula. The plan also provides a \$200 million increase in the Special Education Funding Formula, \$25 million for Pre-K Counts and \$5 million for the Head Start Supplemental Program.

Other Policy Initiatives

Gov. Wolf also outlined some significant policy recommendations, including:

- ♦ lowering the maximum administrative set-aside for scholarship organizations participating in the EITC and OSTC from 20 percent to 5, which will increase the amount of money available for scholarships by up to \$36 million, and requiring those organizations to report more information on the students and families who receive scholarships and their educational outcomes, so that scholarships can be directed to students with the greatest need
- ♦ creating a \$199 million plan that would provide financial assistance to full-time students enrolled in the PASSHE system, with priority given to students pursuing careers in education and health care, while requiring those students to stay in Pennsylvania after graduation for the same number of years for which they receive financial assistance through the program
- ♦ increasing the minimum teacher salary to \$45,000 per year
- ♦ proposing using the RACP program to fund school hazard remediation and broadening the RACP eligibility criteria to include broadband providers and schools
- ♦ asking the federal government to increase funding for broadband expansion, flood mitigation, contaminant remediation, blight, green infrastructure, and transportation projects
- ♦ increasing the state minimum wage to \$12 per hour effective July 1, 2021, with annual increases of \$0.50 until the minimum wage reaches \$15 per hour on July 1, 2027
- ♦ legalizing recreational marijuana and utilizing revenues for state projects
- ♦ reforming government accountability law by restricting gifts to public officials, placing restrictions on PACs, strengthening reporting and disclosure requirements, and enacting election reform

In addition, the governor is again proposing reforms to Pennsylvania's charter school law. Specifically, he proposes changes to current law and policy/budget initiatives that, according to the governor, would save school districts an estimated \$229 million per year. The governor's plan also would apply the four-tiered Special Education Funding formula to all charters to better align Special Education Funding with actual costs of providing services to special education students, would establish a statewide cyber tuition rate of \$9,500 per student per year (est. savings of \$130 million annually), and provides clarification on the redirection process, including the basis for reported expenditures and the deductions included in the tuition rate calculation, to increase fairness, accountability, and transparency. [Click here](#) for the governor's talking points on the need for reform.

PIT Increase

To increase state revenue, Gov. Wolf proposed an increase in the PIT from 3.07% to 4.49%, which would be the first time it has increased since 2003. To assist lower income Pennsylvanians, the governor proposes expanding the special tax forgiveness credit to allow 67% of Pennsylvanians to either get a tax cut or see their taxes stay the same. Estimated revenue from the PIT increase would be approximately \$3 billion annually, with more than \$1.3 billion of that amount going to basic education funding, boosting that total to about \$8.1 billion.

[See Dr. Mark DiRocco's response to the Governor's plan on page 2.](#)

A MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT! 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:

[www.pasa-net.org/
legalservices](http://www.pasa-net.org/legalservices)
to read more about it.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

BY DR. JOHN BELL, 2020-21 PASA PRESIDENT

This is always a tough time of the school year with snow days and delays, staff and students with cabin fever, and the budget process starting up, just to name a few big ticket items on our minds. When you add in the pandemic, vaccine rollout issues and stress about state testing, it is enough to make any school leader scratch his or her head and wonder, "Will it ever end?"

The good news is that it will all resolve itself in due time. However, the stress on leaders can be very dangerous.

As you read these questions, I would like you to forget about your school entity for a few minutes and just think about yourself. Here are a few key questions to consider:

- Am I getting enough sleep?
- Am I eating healthy?
- Am I getting enough exercise?
- Am I able to "turn off" work at night and on weekends?
- Am I doing anything (non-work related) to mentally stimulate my brain?

- How are the social, emotional and spiritual aspects of my life?
- Are there any friends and/or family I need to reconnect with?
- Are there summer vacation plans I want to make to help focus my attention on long-term joy and away from short-term stress?



Now, let's turn our attention to work with some key questions that can help your frame of mind and state of health:

- Are there tasks I should delegate to my staff?
- Are there tasks I should stop doing altogether?
- Are there ways I can be more efficient?
- Are there high-impact leadership actions I should be taking?
- Are there ways I can collaborate with others to accomplish a shared goal?

Whether at school or home, there are always ways to improve your performance, feel less stressed and be happier. A common response to the questions above is often, "I promise to work on these right after we get through this rough patch." However, one rough patch leads to another, and those questions always get put on the back burner. Remember, you are of no help to your family or your organization if you are no longer around.

I recommend you try to work on just a few things at a time. Eating healthy and exercising are two things I don't do enough of each week. I'm working on those two items right now. I hope you can find things above to help you take better care of yourself.

Stephen Covey used to say that you should give 23 hours to the world and one hour to yourself. I encourage you to find one hour per day (or perhaps two 30 minute blocks) to take better care of yourself. You are worth it!

****REGISTER TODAY****



Keynote Presenter: Dr. Bill Daggett
FOCUS: Preparing Students for Their Future, NOT Our Past

A one-day **virtual** leadership conference for superintendents, assistant superintendents, cabinet-level leaders and principals

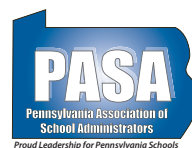
40 PIL/Act 48 (Act 45) hours
pending approval

Dr. Daggett will share emerging solutions to **the challenge of preparing students for THEIR future, not OUR past**. Equity, social justice, social-emotional learning, mental health, and a rigorous and relevant instructional program for all students are critical issues that schools today are required to address, even though the demands of the past have not gone away (i.e. high-stakes tests, rules, certification). Meanwhile, the pandemic and its challenges have created a tipping point for many educators, policy makers, business leaders, and parents around the immediate need to transform our education system. But the pandemic also has taught us that change is possible in the ways we had not imagined even one year ago. Now we must utilize our leadership skills to provide opportunities for change.

See the PASA website at:

<https://www.pasa-net.org/leadforum>

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN



Contacting PASA

PASA staff continues to work remotely. However, we are available for you as we always have been. For urgent questions and concerns, call our alternative phone number: 717-514-8718. For general questions, contact PASA via the general email (pasa@pasa-net.org) and your question will be directed appropriately and promptly.

In addition, you may send an email directly to specific PASA staff members. ([Click here](#) for the staff list.) We monitor all correspondence and respond as quickly as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions and concerns!



BOLD ACTION DESERVES PRAISE: GOVERNOR WOLF'S CHALLENGE

BY STEPHEN RODRIGUEZ, CAUCUS PRESIDENT



Pennsylvania is one of the worst states in the nation when it comes to equitable funding in our public schools. Any number of financial analyses come to the same conclusion.

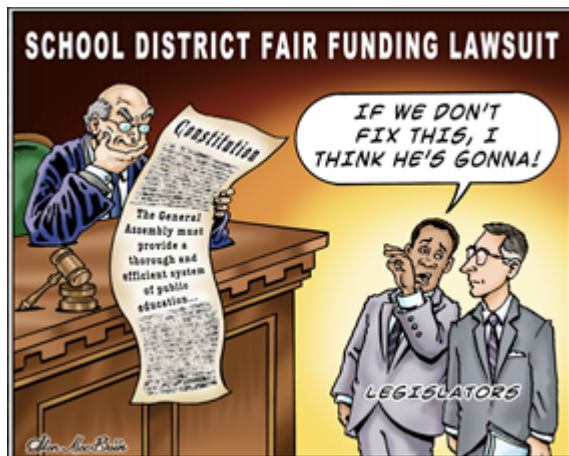
There is no place better to be educated than Pennsylvania if you are white and upper middle class. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. There is no state with greater discrepancy, or more educational inequity for black and brown or poor students. That's not a debate. That's a fact. It's what motivated the overwhelming bipartisan adoption of the fair funding formula in 2016, and it's the reason advocacy groups, state associations, school boards, and educational leaders from many different backgrounds and perspectives have been practically howling for half a decade to fix the funding structure and stop relying on local property taxes so heavily.

But that raises an obvious question: How do we pay for it? Raising income taxes does not go over well in the best of times, and we are still fighting the pandemic.

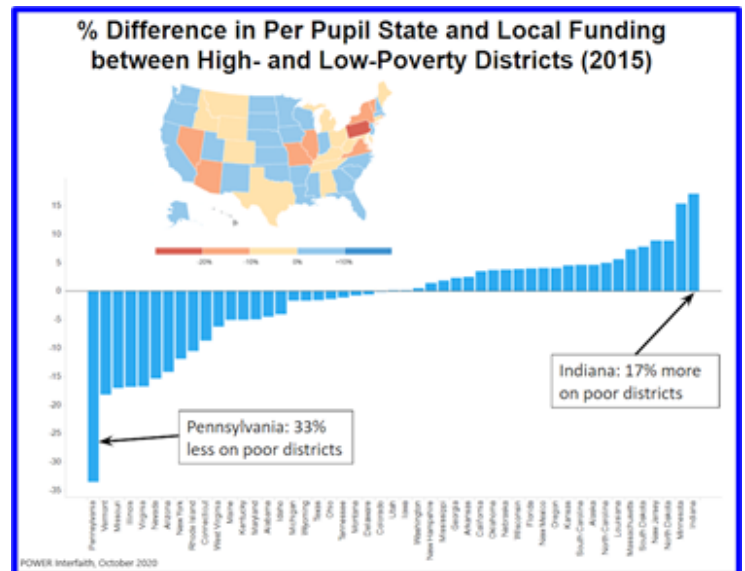
So how do we pay for it? Common sense measures like cyber/charter funding reform would be a great way to help every community and every district, but that has been resisted and rejected for many years.

Then how do we pay for it? The current plan for equity is to wait 50 plus years and hope that, by small adjustments or additions, our *great grandchildren* will see a school system that's equitably funded and serves the commonwealth for the future. That's also a fact. I've done the math.

I haven't won any popularity contests for saying it, but we are better off dealing with truth than polite platitudes. Pennsylvania is shortchanging education funding needs by billions. Worse, Pennsylvania is not currently spending the education budget equitably. In fact, Pennsylvania is currently the most inequitable state in the nation in funding allocations. The numbers tell us that our current path leads to a terrible future. We all have to own that truth.



with permission from cartoonist Alan McBain



Source: POWER Interfaith

Last week, Governor Tom Wolf demonstrated leadership by putting out a proposal he knew would be difficult, if not impossible. Many didn't like it. But no one can argue that we are making progress either.

I applaud Governor Wolf for drawing a line in the sand and challenging us as a state to make progress on these problems instead of wasting time playing politics while our children (and grandchildren) pay the price.

SIDE NOTE: Another benefit of PASA membership is that we recently were invited to an hour-long virtual update from the Public Interest Law Center with attorneys Mike Churchill and Mara Mcinerney on the lawsuit against the PA Department of Education (but really, the legislature) for violating the PA Constitution's clause that states, "The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth" and the U.S. Constitution's equal protection clause. They are scheduled to start trial soon, and they have a very strong case.

Governor Wolf has decided to take bold action which should be applauded since his message for working together to improve our state was so overt. The Public Interest Law Center and six predominantly urban school districts also deserve praise for their efforts over the last seven years to change our system for the better through the judicial court system.

Educational and community leaders must engage the last branch of the government (our Legislature) and remind them that change is hardest when it's needed most. We all need to rise to the challenge and improve our state education system before it's too late.

Next month, I'll connect this to the overall economic implications for our state....



DAWN LIES AHEAD

BY CONNIE KINDLER,
PASA CONSULTANT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



"It is said that the darkest hour of the night comes just before dawn." (Thomas Fuller)

You have had a long and difficult twelve months. Through your words and through your silence, I hear your fatigue and yearning for time to relax, reflect, and even to plan for the dawn that lies ahead.

I cannot remove your pain, but I can offer suggestions to support your transition into dawn.

You are currently leading a war, with little or no reprieve. According to Jocko Willink and Leif Babin in *Extreme Ownership: How US Navy Seals Lead and Win*, several principles are key to success as a wartime leader:

- Top ranking officials must rely heavily upon the troops on the ground.
- The troops must cover and move, working as teammates.
- Command must be decentralized, with an ascending chain of knowledge.
- All must step up and lead.
- To enable quick execution, plans must be simple.

Michael Fullan's *Leading in a Culture of Change 2nd Edition* (2020) describes similar principles for leading agile school cultures that respond quickly to and lead change. Student learning regression and trauma are urgent problems that could be addressed using his approach.

Fullan discusses "framing the work as a learning problem and not an execution problem." Within this method, teams comprised of teachers, specialists, students, parents, a principal and/or central office leader, and others mobilize to participate in cycles of analysis, strategizing and assessment to operationalize successful, sustainable solutions. Teams engage in deep learning, building knowledge related to specific problems.

The process may sound complicated, but, with an understanding of its tenets, it is not difficult to implement:

- Challenges and resolutions are specific to context.
- Collaborative teams consisting of those most familiar with the problem are in the best position to analyze and solve it.
- A bottom-up approach creates consensus and commitment.
- Leadership throughout the organization is core to adaptable cultures.
- Innovativeness and strategizing, not innovations and strategies, create cultures that naturally respond to change and lead change.

Another feasible idea to support your district's transition into dawn is to implement an uncomplicated method for collecting feedback about the merit of the litany of lessons learned throughout this year. Assessing the value of new teaching, learning, and communication tactics for the purpose of carrying them forward makes sense, but, while leading a war, it is best to keep the process simple. When dawn arrives, you will have more time and mental clarity to develop an inclusive and fluid long-range plan.

Facilitating your district's mission of educating students during a long war is tiring and frustrating. However, despite the battle wounds, your courage and resilience are evident and admirable. Be confident and do not surrender. The dawn is ahead, and your students need your vision, strength and commitment.

To reenergize as you prepare for the dawn, join us for our 2021 virtual [Leadership Forum](#) on March 29. Dr. Bill Daggett will address "Leadership in a New Era," based upon his experience leading a national commission focused on "Learning 2025" and his book *The Evolution of Education: Preparing our Students for Their Future, Not Our Past* (2020).

Our future will continue to be unpredictable and ever-changing. It will require agile cultures that respond organically to change and lead change. To hone the proficiencies necessary to lead cultures that naturally innovate and strategize, all school administrators are encouraged to join our [next cohort beginning June 16](#) for a deep dive into Michael Fullan's *Leading in a Culture of Change*.

Both of these learning opportunities are **PIL-approved**.

In the meantime, maintain your optimism and hope. Dawn lies ahead. The darkest hour of the night will soon be behind us.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!



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

Find what you need to know in the weekly "Education Update." Watch your email on **Mondays** for the E-Update and link to this weekly report, a source for the latest in education and budget news from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and the nation.



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!





IT'S GROUNDHOG DAY...AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN

BY BARBARA WALVORT JEWETT, ASSISTANT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Note: In the spirit of both Groundhog Day and its namesake movie, this issue of Writing Out Loud is a slightly modified repeat column from the last three Februaries. Perhaps there really IS nothing new under the sun.

Every year on February 2, I watch the same DVD, always on the same day, and this year for the 18th time. Of course, it's "Groundhog Day."

With Punxsutawney events as its backdrop, we watch Bill Murray as Phil Connors the cynical weatherman living through a recurring day, the do-over that never seems to get done right, and the stages of do-over responses: sarcasm, devilish glee, depression, and finally selflessness, putting others first and seeing the world from a different perspective.

While some may find this movie annoying, I love it. How can you beat a line like this: "This is one time where television really fails to capture the true excitement of a large squirrel predicting the weather?"

But you could also say that Pennsylvania has another "Groundhog Day" every year, ironically falling very close to the real thing: the official beginning of the state budget cycle. Or, as Phil puts it, "Well, it's Groundhog Day... again...."

No matter how crazy the budget process is, no matter how elongated, political, biting-nails-crazy it gets, without fail there is always that same budget cycle, beginning on the first Tuesday of February and continuing until the constitutionally required deadline of 11:59 p.m. on June 30.

So what can we expect this year – again?

Debates on state spending and Pennsylvania revenues. Debates on policy proposals in the midst of a pandemic. Debates on "hot" issues such as elections and the makeup of the state Supreme Court and vaccines and the governor's authority to issue emergency orders and the role of the General Assembly. Press releases and press conferences extolling both the virtues and fallacies of this policy or that one. Legislation jumping to the forefront without warning. And, of course, lots of committee hearings.

It's going to be a bumpy ride this spring.

Based on what we are seeing in the governor's proposal this year and the unknowns concerning more federal aid, we likely will see some hypertension-inducing debates on state spending and balancing the budget this spring. And policy considerations beyond just financial ones definitely will be part of the mix, many of them the same as last year and the year before that and the years before that, sometimes with an added twist, issues such as charter school reform, accountability and assessment, local control vs. state control, etc. Then there are the new issues related to the pandemic and the old stand-by issues like property tax reform, which is always waiting in the wings.

A newly installed General Assembly with many new caucus and committee leaders and a governor with only two years left in his term of office also will add to the mix.

Meanwhile, the pandemic has pinched both Pennsyl-

vania and school districts financially, and we have no idea how many years into the future we will feel its effects. We do know that school districts continue to lose ground financially, with increasing costs for special education in particular, high pension payments and increasingly higher charter school tuition payments, something that has become an even bigger issue over the past year. The release last month of the [PASBO/PASA/PARSS School District Budget Report](#) makes that clear.

That is why we all need to stay vigilant, informed and ready to advocate for our public schools this spring with both our state representatives and our congressional delegation. We need to tell our stories and make sure our communities and our representatives know what is really happening in our schools. The need for important conversations is critical.

If you feel you are doing the same thing over and over again in advocacy, much like Phil Connors and Punxsutawney Phil, you are right. It can be tiring and may even seem like a waste of time to be asked to call your legislators on this issue or that issue, especially when those requests come frequently or when the political climate puts the issue on the backburner or if other critical issues are taking center stage. It's easy to fall into the "I can't make a difference anyway" mindset, much as Phil Connors did: "You want a prediction about the weather? You're asking the wrong Phil. I'm going to give you a prediction about this winter. It's going to be cold, it's going to be dark, and it's going to last you for the rest of your life."

Or, we can simply rail privately at what is going on, assume nothing can be done, and just let that angry sense of doom overtake us, much as Phil did: "This is pitiful. A thousand people freezing their butts off waiting to worship a rat. What a hype! Groundhog Day used to mean something in this town. They used to pull the hog out, and they used to eat it. You're hypocrites, all of you!"

Sometimes it all just seems as though no one is listening and any effort we make just falls on deaf ears. Sometimes, when there is so much else to do, it is much easier to defer to PASA to be the advocate. Yes, advocacy certainly is a key priority for your association, and we will be at the Capitol working on issues important to public education. The PASA Advocacy Priorities will inform that work.

But as PASA's Executive Director Mark DiRocco has put it many times, "Lawmakers need to hear 800-900 united voices on these important issues every time. Numbers matter!"

So, as challenging as it may be, let's use advocacy this spring as a positive. Yes, it takes time. Yes, it can be a bother when there are so many other things on your plate. But not saying anything IS saying something – and what it is saying is not positive for public education. We can't afford that.

Work with PASA, communities within your district and your IU peers to develop advocacy strategies and coalitions. Put your elected representatives on speed-dial. Join in advocacy events and contact your representatives when PASA sends out an Action Alert.

Remember this: The challenges we have faced during the past year are not going away tomorrow. The need for advocacy not only from the PASA office but also from the local level will continue to be vital. And even if sometimes you feel you are doing the same thing over and over again, remember that often repeating the message is just what is actually needed, even when it seems like you are just dancing in a perpetual and repetitive circle. With a concerted effort and positive advocacy focused on what is best for public schools, there may be a light at the bottom of the groundhog hole.

NAVIGATING THE SCHOOL YEAR: UPDATES & RESOURCES

continued from page 1

be able to safely return to in-person instruction, even in communities with widespread coronavirus infection, if the schools use key health and safety practices such as mask-wearing, social distancing, sanitation, and keeping students in small groups or “cohorts” to limit interaction. In contrast to the potentially positive findings on in-person learning, the CDC’s study on transmission at school athletic events offers a cautionary tale. It concluded that during periods of moderate or high COVID-19 community transmission, schools should postpone high-contact sports where masking and physical distancing aren’t possible. (from *Education Week*, 1/26/21).

- On January 21 President Biden released [***National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness***](#), an outline of his plan to combat COVID-19 and reopen schools. The 200-page federal plan, plus executive orders he signed immediately after the inauguration, call for “sustained and coordinated” efforts with the cooperation of states and new resources, guidance and data for schools as they continue to respond to the pandemic. (from *Education Week*, 1/21/21)

- Also last month, the U.S. Department of Education released an addendum fact sheet, [***“Providing Services to English Learners During the COVID-19 Outbreak,”***](#) to better explain SEA and LEA responsibilities for assessing English learners during the pandemic.

- – (from AASA) The U.S. Dept. of Education (USED) recently released a document that provides Local Education Agencies (LEA) and State Education Agencies (SEA) with guidance on how to carry out the data collection activities for the education programs associated with the federal school meals programs. Specifically, this guidance pertains to the National School Lunch Program data collection activities associated with Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs; Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction; and Title V, Part B – Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS) for the 2021-2022 school year. According to [**the guidance**](#), using data from the 2019-2020 school year is allowable for all circumstances, which means that ED has essentially created a hold-harmless provision for school districts and states that have seen a decline in free and reduced-price lunch forms.

- (from AASA) On January 29, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released new Pandemic EBT guidance that will allow states to provide P-EBT benefits to children in schools and childcare settings. Specifically, this guidance provides states with new flexibilities when developing or amending P-EBT plans and increases the daily P-EBT benefit for both school children and children in childcare by approximately 15 percent to reflect the value of a free reimbursement for an afterschool snack. Check out the full details via USDA’s memo, updated state plan template, and accompanying Q&As document [**here**](#).

Federal COVID Aid...

The Biden administration has released more information about the President’s \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 economic relief proposal. “A Detailed Explanation of the K-12 Funding Request in the American Rescue Plan” serves as the Administration’s justification to Congress to appropriate \$145 billion in K-12 education funding to support LEA’s safely reopening.

The plan differs from the initial details of Biden’s \$130B K-12 education proposal during the campaign trail. As a justification for the increased funding from Congress, the President based his new proposal on CDC cost estimates associated with safely operating school districts during the 2020-21 academic year an approximation of the costs for school districts to avoid lay-offs into the next school year, and an estimate of the additional costs around the academic and social-emotional needs of students as a result of the pandemic. (reported by AASA)

[**Click here**](#) for an overview of the breakdown in the allowable uses of K-12 funding.

Although discussion since January has focused on finding bipartisan support for a new relief plan, at this point that seems elusive. As a result, the House aims to pass a coronavirus relief bill within two weeks, as Democrats push ahead with the process that enables them to approve a rescue package with no Republican votes. As the initial step, the Senate passed a budget resolution last week (Feb. 5) and the House followed in a nearly party line vote, starting the reconciliation process that would allow the rescue package to get through the Democratic-held Senate with a simple majority.

The budget resolution directs committees to write legislation reflecting Biden’s COVID relief package, while staying under the \$1.9 trillion target. Democrats aim to pass, among other provisions: \$1,400 direct payments; a \$400 per week jobless benefit through September; \$350 billion in state, local and tribal government relief; a \$20 billion national COVID vaccination program; \$50 billion for virus testing; \$170 billion for K-12 schools and higher education institutions; a \$30 billion rent and utility assistance fund. (from CNBC, 2/5/21)

PASA Resources...

We are providing on the PASA website links to updates, resources, information and strategies from both the state and federal level to help in planning and management. Find the resources here: [**https://www.pasa-net.org/coronavirus**](https://www.pasa-net.org/coronavirus). PASA updates the list as information and resources continue to develop. If you know of a website that provides useful ideas and guidance for school leaders, please let us know at [**pasa@pasa-net.org**](mailto:pasa@pasa-net.org).

SPONSORS AND SPONSOR RESOURCES

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our PASA Sponsors at all levels. Although PASA does not promote or endorse any product or service offered by our sponsors, we are pleased to share information that may be helpful to school leaders.

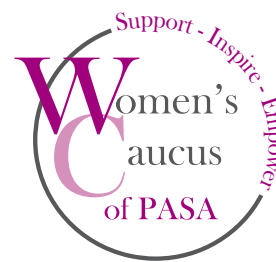
The PASA website includes a page listing COVID-related resources and information offered by several PASA sponsors. Check it out [**here**](#).

See more information about our [**PASA Sponsors**](#) and [**PASA Business-Level Sponsors**](#).



THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL POWER OF POSITIVITY

BY DR. MAUREEN D. LETCHER AND DR. FRANCINE ENDLER



More than ever, the ability to remain positive is critical in both our personal and professional lives. As educational leaders, we are tasked with taking the latest set of challenges and reframing them so that our districts and communities remain focused on students. In our personal lives, we are responding to the needs of our own families and ourselves.

Successfully navigating those two worlds can be supported by a growth mindset, determination and a positive outlook. Positivity is defined as "the practice of being or tendency to be positive or optimistic in attitude." What fuels your positive attitude? How do you share your positivity with others?

We have all heard the phrase "get the right people on the bus." This usually refers to your work team and having the right people in the right positions in order to

make impactful change. All of this is true. However, this also needs to be carried over in our own lives. Who is on your "build you up" team? Who is your positivity source?

We need to have those people in our lives. On the flip side, we also need to be that person for others in our work environment. As leaders, people look to us, observe us and pull strength from us. It is especially important that during these daily unknown challenges we impact those around us by facing those challenges with positivity. At times it is tough to put on our "game face," but as the educational leaders, especially during a pandemic, we need to demonstrate our resiliency and our positivity through our words and actions. People are drawn to positivity and drained from negativity.

It is important to consider that bringing positivity to professional and personal experiences does not negate or diminish the magnitude or importance of a situation. Rather, it creates a space where optimism can be a lens through which we process difficult tasks.

Connections can help to create positivity. Engaging in networking and professional learning opportunities through PASA is a great way to connect with other school leaders and surround yourself with positive people and energy, both personally and professionally. Remember that caring for yourself is investing in yourself.

Dr. Letcher is high school principal in the Hollidaysburg Area SD. Dr. Endler is executive director of Central I.U. 10. Both are members of the PASA Women's Caucus Board.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR PASA WOMEN'S CAUCUS AWARDS

The PASA Women's Caucus is seeking nominations for two annual awards honoring individuals annually for special awards of recognition. Both awards are based on four criteria: leadership, significant contributions in inspiring women and/or their peers, significant accomplishments, and evidence of continuing professional and/or personal growth.

The two awards are:

WANDA MCDANIEL AWARD: given to an aspiring female school administrator who shows evidence of great leadership potential.

MARGARET SMITH LEADERSHIP AWARD: given to a female administrator who has demonstrated proven leadership in education.

Nominations are due **Friday, February 19.**

Go to <https://www.pasa-net.org/wcawards> for the nomination forms.

SAVE THE DATES:

**2021 Southeast Region
Caucus Dinner
November 10**

**2022 Women's Caucus
Spring Conference
May 22 - 24**

Due to ongoing COVID and district travel concerns, the scheduled 2021 spring conference in Hershey has been postponed to spring 2022.

**Watch for details on other events to
be scheduled between now and
the next conference!**

NOMINEES SOUGHT FOR PASA OFFICERS, AASA REPRESENTATIVES

PASA is seeking nominations for the 2021-22 PASA President-Elect/Secretary and Treasurer. In addition, PASA is seeking nominations for two Pennsylvania representatives to the AASA Governing Board.

PASA OFFICERS

Candidates for **PASA President-Elect/Secretary** must make a three-year commitment to the association by serving one year each as President-Elect/Secretary and chairman of the Advocacy Committee beginning October 1, 2021, as President beginning October 1, 2022, and as Past-President and chairman of the Membership Committee beginning October 1, 2023.

Candidates for **PASA Treasurer** serve a one-year term. The elected Treasurer's term begins on October 1, 2021.

See the PASA [website](#) for the list of duties for each office.

Eligibility

Each eligible candidate must have been an active member of the Association for at least three years prior to October 1, 2020 and a PASA member in one of two membership categories: Commissioned Officer and Small District Leader.

Nominations & Deadlines

Due to COVID concerns, interested candidates are not asked to collect physical signatures to support their candidacy via nomination petitions. Rather, those interested in one of the officer positions should send their statement of interest directly to Dr. Mark DiRocco, PASA Executive Director, via email at mdirocco@pasa-net.org.

Once PASA confirms the candidate's eligibility to run for the position, PASA will develop an online survey/petition for that candidate via SurveyMonkey and provide the candidate with the link to that survey. Candidates then will be able to share that link electronically to secure the online endorsement of at least twenty (20) voting members of PASA from a combination of no less than two (2) PASA regions, including the candidate's own region (I.U.). "Voting members of PASA" are Commissioned Officer and Small District Leader members. The online "survey" petition will close by **6 p.m. on March 12, 2021.**

In advance of the election, candidates who have obtained at least 20 signatures from voting members of PASA will be asked to submit to the PASA office a letter (with digital picture) outlining their reasons for seeking the position.

PENNSYLVANIA REPRESENTATIVES TO THE AASA GOVERNING BOARD

PASA is seeking nominations for two (2) Pennsylvania representatives to the Board, each with three-year terms beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

Current PA representatives on the Board include Dr. Nicholas Guarente (Greenwood), Dr. Bridget O'Connell (Palisades), Dr. G. Brian Toth (St. Marys Area), Dr. Brian Troop (Ephrata Area) and Lee Ann Wentzel (Ridley). Dr. Shane Hotchkiss (Bermudian Springs) currently serves on the AASA Executive Committee, having been elected in 2018 by Governing Board members representing the Mid-Atlantic region.

About the Governing Board

The AASA Governing Board consists of representatives elected from each state. See the [PASA website](#) for a list of responsibilities of the Governing Board.

Eligibility/Requirements

1. Each eligible candidate must have been an eligible voting member of **both** AASA and PASA for **at least** three years. ("Voting members of PASA" include those who are current members as *Commissioned Officer* and *Small District Leader* members. "Voting members of AASA" are those who are current members as *Active*, *Institutional Active*, *Life* or *College Professor*.)
2. Nominees must be committed to attending **two** AASA meetings per year, in July and February (beginning July 2021). Travel expenses are provided for the July meeting. Governing Board members are responsible for their own expenses to the February meeting, which coincides with the AASA National Conference on Education.

Nominations

Candidates may self-nominate or be nominated by current PASA members who are Commissioned Officer or Small District Leader members. No signatures or petitions are required. As part of the election process, candidates must submit electronically to the PASA office by March 12 a short biographical statement/letter (including involvement with AASA and PASA), goals for AASA, and reason(s) for seeking the position, along with a digital photograph.

Application information (listed above) is due to PASA
no later than **March 12.**

**The election for PASA officers and the
AASA Governing Board representative will be
scheduled for early spring (TBA).**

Questions?

Contact Jolene Zelinski
at jolenez@pasa-net.org.

Learn together...

Grow together...

Lead together!

Take advantage of the numerous professional learning programs PASA is offering for school administrators in 2021!

See the list on page 14.

ADVOCACY UPDATE

PASA continues to both provide information to members and advocate on their behalf. Some of these activities since the January issue of *The PASA Flyer* was published included the following:

Advocacy

- We are continuing to work with our lobbyist and other education associations on issues of mutual concern as the 2021-22 legislative session gets underway this month, specifically focused on the need for charter/cyber charter reform and adequate & equitable school funding for basic and special education.
- PASA continues to communicate with the PDE and Department of Health about the need for transparency in pandemic directives and the need to inform school officials of changing guidance in advance of public announcements to help school officials better plan for necessary changes and communicate those changes to staff and parents.
- PASA continues to keep the liability issue before lawmakers and is urging the governor to sign an executive order providing such liability to public school officials.
- Dr. DiRocco continues to meet via Zoom with AASA legislative advocacy staff and executives from other state superintendent associations to share information and updates related to school operations and state education policy.

Information

- PASA sent to commissioned officers on Feb. 9 information from a recent meeting of education associations with officials from the PDE, DOH and the Governor's Office concerning vaccines and prospects for educator vaccines in the near future, as well as the possibility of using school districts as Points of Distribution for wider spread vaccinations.
- PASA sent to lawmakers and the governor last month another issue of *PASA Points*, a two-page informational publication that focused on the recently released PASBO/PASA/PARSS report on school district budgets and the exploding cost of cyber charter school tuition. PASA also sent to policymakers this month the newest edition of *PASA Points*, this time focused on the Governor's budget proposal and the issue of resolving the inequity of school funding. (All current and past issues of *PASA Points* are available on the [PASA website](#).)

- Dr. DiRocco meets virtually with the PASA Legislative Committee during weeks in which the General Assembly is in session to provide additional legislative updates, discuss issues of high concern and plan for advocacy.
- PASA sent to members on January 27 an alert urging them to contact their members of Congress to request a waiver from federal accountability testing for the 2020-21 school year. PASA also joined PSBA, the PA Principals Association, PARSS, PSEA, AFT, PASBO, PAIU and PACTA to send a joint letter on January 15 to then President-elect Biden, as well as Senator Casey, Senator Toomey and Secretary of Education nominee Miguel Cardona, advocating for the waiver.
- On January 29 PASA sent an alert to superintendent and I.U. executive director members informing them of the announced change in the protocol to reopen schools after a COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition, PASA continues to update the [coronavirus web page](#) and provide additional education news and information through the weekly Update on Mondays and *The PASA Flyer*.



VIRTUAL FORUM

June 16, July 21 and August 18
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

for ALL district leaders, including central office and school building administrators seeking to lead change in their districts and schools

40 PIL Hours (approval pending)

(See the website for requirements)

The fallout of COVID-19, combined with continuing advances in digital technology and an increasing demand for authentic student-centered learning, presents an unprecedented opportunity to transform education across whole systems. For that reason, ***Leading in a Culture of Change, 2nd edition*** (2020), by Michael Fullan, will provide the foundation and focus of this facilitated forum that will provide an opportunity for school administrators to discuss leading change in their own districts. The program consists of inquiry-based small and large group discussions about the leadership components within Fullan's book. (Participants must purchase their own copy of the book.)

FEE* - \$199 for PASA members/\$259 for non-members

***Payments are due by June 9.**

Virtual information will be sent to paid registrants.

See the PASA website at

<https://www.pasa-net.org/leadingchange>.



PASA 'AWARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT' RECOGNIZE PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

PASA is seeking nominations for the three special awards recognizing leadership in public education – and we need YOUR help in identifying those among us who are deserving of special recognition.

The PASA Awards of Achievement were developed to recognize the good work that school administrators have been doing to lead school systems in a positive direction, meet the needs of students and staff, and advocate for public education.

The awards fall into three categories:

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION - Demonstrating commitment to excellence as evidenced through notable service to the profession.

Sponsored by: Horace Mann

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP - Demonstrating commitment to excellence in teaching and learning by developing, nurturing and supporting exemplary programs that support the academic achievement of particular student populations, enrich student learning in a particular content area, or implement strategies to enhance student learning across the curriculum.

Sponsored by: Lincoln Investment Planning, Inc.

LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC EDUCATION - Demonstrating commitment to school administration as a profession, to public education, and to one's colleagues, including participation in and leadership with the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators.

Sponsored by: PLGIT/PFM

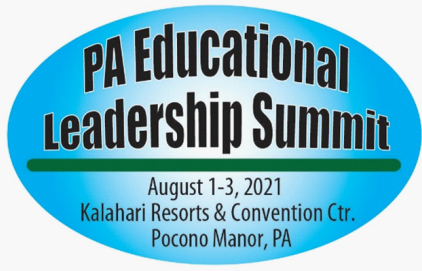
The awards process, scheduled initially for spring 2020, was delayed due to the pandemic. This year's recipients will be recognized for their work in 2020 and into 2021.

Deadline for nominations is **February 12.**

For more details on eligibility and the nomination process, see the PASA web site at

www.pasa-net.org/pasaawards.

PASA thanks our Awards of Achievement sponsors for their continuing support in recognizing outstanding public school administrators in Pennsylvania.



**** REGISTRATION IS OPEN! ****

PA EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

August 1-3

at Kalahari Resorts & Convention Center

for school leaders and district leadership teams to learn, network and plan

Earn up to 80 PIL Hours – more details to come!

Keynote speakers, high quality breakout sessions, table talks on hot topics, Ed Camp and district team planning and job-alike sessions will provide practical ideas that can be immediately reviewed and discussed at the summit and utilized at the district level.

KEYNOTES



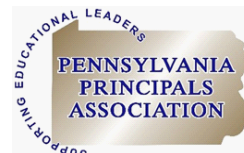
Scarlett Lewis



Dr. Adam Drummond

To register, go to: <https://www.papprincipals.org>

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Imagine Learning
Step-by-Step Learning
TEN: The Efficiency Network

BUSINESS PARTNER

Easy Procure

Professional Learning



See the PASA website for program updates at
<https://www.pasa-net.org/programs>.

Winter Webinar Series

"Leading Cultures that Prioritize the Well-Being of all
Students, Staff and Leaders"

Noon to 1:00 p.m.

March 10 and April 14

*All webinars are recorded. Registrants will receive a
link to the recording.*

Superintendent Forum: Leading in a Culture of Change

VIRTUAL

Approved for 40 PIL/Act 45 hours

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

March 11 and April 8

**PASA Leadership Forum: Leadership in a New Era
with Dr. Bill Daggett**

VIRTUAL

Approved for 40 PIL/Act 45 hours

**Focus: Preparing Students for THEIR Future, Not OUR Past
March 29**

Summer Forum: Leading in a Culture of Change

VIRTUAL

For ALL school administrators

Approved for 40 PIL/Act 45 hours

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

June 16, July 21, August 18

PA Educational Leadership Summit

Approved for up to 80 PIL/Act 45 hours

August 1-3

Kalahari Poconos

SAVE THE DATE...

Learning Through September

**New Superintendents' Virtual Session:
Introduction to the Superintendency
July 27**

**New Superintendents' Academy
Part 1: Strategic & Cultural Leadership
September 23-24**



TOPIC: STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY PLANNING AND INVESTMENT

EmpowerED Superintendent Monthly Webinar

The free recording of this past Monday's February 8 EmpowerED Superintendent Webinar, co-hosted by CoSN, AASA and edWeb.net, and sponsored by ClassLink, is now available.

"Strategic Technology Planning and Investment: Priorities, Cost and Impacts in Today's Learning Environments" featured Dr. Doug Brubaker, Superintendent of Texarkana ISD, TX, Dr. M. Ann Levett, Superintendent of Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, GA and Dr. Kristi Wilson, Superintendent of Buckeye Elementary School District, AZ and current President of AASA, who joined together in an interactive conversation and shared how they lead their districts in creating successful and impactful technology plans. Each superintendent explained the strategies they use to bring together a wide range of needs, interests, and district priorities to create technology plans that address the total cost of ownership, impacts on teaching and learning, and the value of those technology investments.

The current crises that have come out of the COVID-19 pandemic have shown the world how critical technology is to continue teaching and learning, along with multiple other aspects of school operations. The three superintendents shared the technology strategies they have used over the past year to assure that their schools continue to function for the benefit all students and families.

Free registration for the recording of this webinar is [available here](#).

Multiple other webinars in this series are also freely available as recordings at <https://home.edweb.net/supers/> and via podcast at <https://home.edweb.net/podcasts/>.

Strategic Technology Planning & Investment – CoSN Resources

A one-page document, [Strategic Technology Planning and Investment](#), provides leaders with three essential focal points for SmartIT decisions. Additionally CoSN provides a multi-page [Smart IT Guide](#) that delves into questions school leaders need to consider around Total Cost of Ownership and Return on Investment.

The [SMART IT web page](#) features a link for CoSN members to download a toolkit created in collaboration with the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO). The CoSN/ASBO resource, *Working Together for Student Success: A Guide for SBOs and CTOs* describes strategies for school districts' business and technology departments to successfully work together.

COSN 2021

The 2021 Annual CoSN Conference, scheduled for March 2-4, features interactive breakout sessions, LIVE keynotes, unique networking opportunities, and more. Learn more and register for CoSN 2021 at <https://cosnconference.org>.

The Consortium for School Networking ([CoSN](#)) and its state affiliate chapter, Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology ([PAECT](#)) are honored to support the work of current and aspiring superintendents and district leadership teams in leading all aspects of digital learning transformations. If your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact Brian Calvary, CAE, CoSN Director of Membership and Chapters, at bcalvary@cosn.org.



COMMUNICATIONS TIP OF THE MONTH

"People are looking to connect on a human level. Our families are 'Zoomed' out. Many of our students and families have spent large parts of their lives over the past 10 months in their homes and with limited contacts. Our blogging as school district leaders can humanize us and our work. We are facing the same challenges as our families and doing our best to make decisions that are unprecedented."

– Chris Kennedy, superintendent of the West Vancouver SD in British Columbia, from "Superintendent Blogging in a Pandemic and Beyond," as published in the February issue of *School Administrator*. This month's issue examines what educators are learning about the pandemic-forced pivot to remote instruction.

RECAP: NEW SUPERINTENDENTS' ACADEMY PART 3

"Professional & Community Leadership" was the focus of Part 3 of the PASA New Superintendents' Academy, offered January 21-22. Sessions and presenters in the virtual program focused on a variety of topics, including:

- ♦ *Modeling Ethical Leadership for the Promotion of Each Student's Academic Success and Well-Being* – Dr. Terrance Furin (St. Joseph's University)
- ♦ *Engaging Families and the Community in Meaningful, Reciprocal and Mutually Beneficial Ways* – Dr. John Sanville (Unionville-Chadds Ford)
- ♦ *Modeling Professional Norms and Holding Faculty and Staff to the Same High Standards* – (panel) Christopher Dormer (Norristown Area), Dr. Jeffrey Fuller (Freedom Area) and Dr. Bridget O'Connell (Palisades)
- *♦ *Advocating for the Needs of Students and Public Education* – Lee Ann Wentzel (Ridley)
- ♦ *Building Understanding, Trust & Support through Communications with Stakeholders* – Mary Curley (Chester County I.U.)
- ♦ *Communication During and Beyond the Current Crisis* – (panel) Dr. Jill Jacoby (Fort Cherry), Dr. James Scanlon (West Chester Area) and Michael Vuckovich (Indiana Area)
- ♦ *Communication & Connection: The Pathway to Organizational Excellence* (recorded) – Dr. Peter Aiken (Manheim Central)

THANK YOU TO OUR PRESENTERS!



LEFT: Dr. Sanville focused on communication strategies to gain community consensus.



RIGHT: Ms. Wentzel talked about the legislative process and the superintendent's important role as an advocate.



ABOVE: Dr. Furin discussed the importance of leadership and modeling ethical behavior.

ACADEMY GRADUATES

Thirty graduates completed all three sessions of the Academy and were recognized following the two-day program. They are (L-R):



Top row: **Dr. Mark DiRocco**, PASA Executive Director; **Wendy Kupsky** (Berwick Area); **Connie Kindler**, PASA Consultant for Professional Development; **Lee Lesisko** (Pleasant Valley), **Dr. Faye Pleso** (Gettysburg Montessori CS)

Second row: **Samuel Johnson** (Bradford Area), **Dr. Jennifer Polinchock** (Lewisburg Area), **Dr. Mary Catherine Reljac** (Fox Chapel Area), **Dr. Lura Hanks** (Greencastle-Antrim), **Dr. Jodi Frankelli** (Palmerton Area)

Third row: **Dr. Jerry Shoemaker** (Tussey Mountain), **Dr. Keith Hartbauer** (Brownsville Area), **Leonard Rich** (Laurel), **Michael Bromirski** (Hempfield), **Dr. Melissa Woodard** (Wyomissing Area)

Fourth row: **Dr. Alberta O'Brien** (Community Academy of Philadelphia CS), **Leslie Estep** (Tyrone Area), **Curtis Whitesel** (Homer-Center), **Dr. Laura Jacob** (California Area), **Michael Kelly** (East Penn)

Fifth row: **Dr. Jeff Beltz** (Moon Area), **Dr. Lucretia Brown** (Allentown), **Dr. Brian Ulmer** (Jersey Shore Area), **Dr. Kimberlie Rieffannacht** (Hempfield Area), **Jason Harris** (Morrisville Borough)

Sixth row: **James Becker** (Southern Columbia Area), **Dr. Yolanda Williams** (Norristown Area), **Ryan Scallion** (Philadelphia)

ADDITIONAL GRADUATES...



Dr. Francine Endler
(Central I.U. 10)



John Kimmel
(Union)



Steven Kirkpatrick
(Northern York Co.)



Jeffrey Vizza
(Brockway Area)

2021 NEW SUPERINTENDENTS' ACADEMY DATES

- July 27: Introduction to the Superintendency (virtual)
- Sept. 23-24: Strategic & Cultural Leadership
- Nov. 15-16: Systems Leadership
- Jan. 20-21, 2022: Professional & Community Leadership

Watch the PASA website for information at
www.pasa-net.org/workshopnsa.



NOTEWORTHY QUOTES



From Governor Wolf's Budget Address...

"What if we asked people about the barriers standing between them and the bright future they imagined when they decided to build a life here in the Commonwealth? When I first got to Harrisburg, the answer was almost always the same: it's the schools. Far too many parents across the Commonwealth – in Westmoreland County, in Fulton County, in Tioga County, in North Philadelphia, and beyond – felt like the opportunities available to their kids would be determined less by their talent and more by their zip code. No matter how great a parent you are, if your local school system lacks the resources it needs to provide your kids with a quality education, that's a barrier to giving them a better life. A barrier so big, it actually blocks out the sun."

"Even with these tax cuts for working families and businesses, my plan more than doubles our investment in education. Finally, we will be able to fully and fairly fund every school, in every school district, in every part of the commonwealth. Putting all this funding through the fair funding formula means that struggling schools will finally get the resources they need without taking away from schools already being adequately funded. Imagine: No more chronic underfunding. No more budget gimmicks, shifting around money to hide our shortfalls. No more picking winners and losers. No more last-minute, one-time bailouts for school districts because they can't make ends meet. And no more passing on the cost of our broken system in the form of skyrocketing property taxes."

"Go online. Look at my budget. Look at what it would mean for your family, for your community, and for our commonwealth. And if you agree that your family would be better off in a Pennsylvania with fairer taxes and better schools, raise your voice. At the end of the day, we all work for you. If you've had enough of being told why your government can't solve your problems, make it crystal clear that, this time, you don't want to hear that anymore; that you won't accept any more excuses. Call your representatives. Help me get this budget through the legislature. Let's make Pennsylvania an even better place to live, work, and dream big dreams for your kids. And for our future."

Response to the Proposed Budget

"Governor Wolf and his Democrat allies are once again proving they have forgotten about Main Street and every middle-class family in the Commonwealth. The governor's latest tax scheme would be a fatal blow for many employers across Pennsylvania. These are the same small businesses the governor forced to remain shuttered during the pandemic; all the while allowing their competitors and big box stores to remain open. The budget he is presenting is completely unsustainable, totally irresponsible and absolutely crippling to the state's economy. Now is not the time to ask Pennsylvanians to send more of their hard-earned dollars to Harrisburg." – Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre), Senate President Pro Tempore

"The governor's proposal to finally and immediately deal with the issue of equal funding of our K-12 schools, is welcome and deserves broad based support, especially since he makes sure that no student is penalized for this aggressive commitment to equity and adequacy. His \$1 billion commitment to clean and repair broken and toxic schools, along with his commitment to free and affordable college for Pennsylvania students are welcome policy goals that the Senate Democratic Caucus has long championed. And his desire to do all of this in a way that reduces taxes on low- and middle-income families is certainly the right way to go. This is a good direction, and we welcome the introduction of these significant policy goals as the first step in the upcoming budget and policy conversation." – Sen. Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia/Montgomery), Democratic chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee

"Today we learned exactly what priorities Gov. Wolf has for the people of Pennsylvania. While I respectfully disagree with many of these proposals, including raising income taxes and full legalization of marijuana, my deepest concerns are related to the actual administration of our government..." – Rep. Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster), Speaker of the House

"We appreciate the increase in Special Education Funding, as this is one of the most rapidly increasing mandated expenses in school districts each year. Special education services are critically important to students with special needs and are mandated by state and federal law. School districts have disproportionately funded most of the cost of these important services for decades." – from PASA's statement in response to the governor's plan

On COVID Relief...

"AASA represents the nation's public school leaders and applauds the clear, strong and decisive direction being demonstrated on Day One of the Biden administration. The National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness and Executive Orders released today represent a much-needed step forward in a coordinated response to the ongoing pandemic and will help to alleviate some of the downward pressure and decision making that was placed upon local leaders to date.... This direct responsiveness to practitioner feedback is critical and demonstrates that the Biden administration, serious in its priority of opening schools in its first 100 days, recognizes that the ultimate work and responsibility of opening schools lies with local school system leaders and that, as such, their voice, insights and recommendations should be reflected in any nationwide plan." – Dan Domenech, executive director of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, on Pres. Biden's COVID-relief plan (from a press release, 1/21/21)

The **ADVOCATE** A LOOK AT THIS YEAR'S VIRTUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

February is usually a time when we look forward to seeing superintendents from across the country gathering together somewhere warm or fun (or both) and chatting about the politics of Washington, the politics of their hometowns and learning together from great leaders and inspiring thinkers. While we won't be in sunny San Diego this year, AASA's Policy & Advocacy team is still excited to have some great professional learning opportunities planned this month, culminating in our first-ever virtual National Conference on Education.

Before we describe some of the sessions we have selected for the Policy & Advocacy strand, you should know we have intentionally decided not to offer our annual Federal Advocacy Update this year as part of NCE. We know you're not seeing us or hearing from our team as often as you normally would, and we didn't want to compete for your time and attention with so other many great sessions at our national conference. So, we are offering our normal, full-team, one-hour, jam-packed federal education policy update on February 10 at 2 p.m. ET for any and all AASA members. You can sign up to [register here](#) and if you can't attend, you can still obtain a copy of our PPT and a link to watch the event afterwards.

Back to NCE: This year we wanted to offer not just sessions you know and love (like our [superintendent salary and contract session with Maree Sneed](#)), but also sessions that feature some high profile, diverse speakers who can and should push you to think differently, or at least think more deeply about your job as a federal advocate for your district.

The first of these is a session with **Jessica Rosenworcel**, acting FCC chairwoman and a long-time friend of AASA. Rosenworcel has been a commissioner at the FCC since 2011. Throughout her tenure at the Commission, her focus on closing the digital divide for students has been outstanding. We are thrilled that President Biden has nominated this champion for digital equity for kids to be the new chairwoman of the FCC. This is a great opportunity to hear what she wants to do to support the E-Rate program and other programs that touch connectivity in schools in her new role.

The next two sessions we wanted to flag are complimentary in their focus on school segregation. The first features **Richard Rothstein**, one of the boldest and most heralded scholars on the subject. Rothstein will again share with AASA members the history of school segregation and the role that the U.S. Government played in creating and sustaining racially segregated school systems.

As a compliment to this session, we are excited to introduce you to **Chana Joffe Walt**, a radio journalist and producer, whose podcast *Nice White Parents*, exploded in popularity this summer for its view that one of the most powerful forces in shaping our public schools, white parents, are at the heart of what's wrong with our public schools. *Nice White Parents* was recorded over a five-year period and describes various attempts to integrate our public schools over the course of American history, including the present day, and how white parents who say they want integration and diversity often become obstacles to true racial equity.

We also have sessions that are focused on what superintendents are dealing with right now: COVID cases. We couldn't help but do an NCE session with **Emily Oster**, a renowned health economist from Brown University. She has partnered with AASA in the development of a COVID-19 database for districts. Oster, along with Qualtrics, a brilliant firm that maintains the database, will describe how districts can utilize the platform, what we know so far about COVID spread in schools (based on data provided by AASA members), and what mitigation strategies appear to be the most effective based on our data.

Finally, given that the work of superintendents, particularly these days, is highly scrutinized by local, state and national media, we compiled a panel comprised of the best of the best in education policy journalism that will not only give you their take on what's happening in federal education policy these days and their predictions for the Biden Administration and new Congress, but also provide ideas for how to engage with reporters most effectively, particularly when it comes to national issues. You won't want to miss the conversation with reporters from *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Education Week*.

We hope you can make it to some of these exciting sessions. Stay safe and healthy.

PASA GOLD SPONSOR

The NWEA logo consists of the lowercase letters "nwea" in a bold, rounded, yellow font.

COVID has changed the way educators teach, interact with families, and measure academics.
Here are [7 TIPS FOR REPORTING ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT](#)
to your board this year.

Teach. Learn. Grow.
The education blog brought to you by NWEA.

National Superintendent of the Year

Next week during the opening session of the National Conference on Education (Feb. 18), AASA will announce the 2021 National Superintendent of the Year. This year's nominees are: Bryan Johnson, Hamilton County Schools, Chattanooga, Tenn.; **Khalid Mumin, Reading School District, Reading, Pa.**; Christy Perry, Salem-Keizer Public Schools, Salem, Ore.; and Michelle Reid, Northshore School District, Bothell, Wash.

In This Month's School Administrator

This month's issue of *School Administrator* features a look at how **Gregg McGough**, director of curriculum for the Columbia Borough SD in Lancaster County, implemented "guerilla professional development" at the beginning of the pandemic to put in place instructional strategies and digital tools early on. "As just-in-time training, Guerilla PD listens to teachers' problems and supports their informal communities of practice seeking to implement new strategies and use new technologies," he writes.

Mini-Grant Recipients

Last month AASA announced that the **Ridley School District** in Delaware County was selected as one of 32 districts across the country to receive the 2021 Helping Kids Mini-Grants, a mini-grant program funded by AASA through a partnership with Sourcewell to help meet the urgent equity, connectivity and virtual-learning needs of individual students and their families.

The grants this year were increased to \$80,000 in funds divided up into 32 grants.

From AASA President Kristi Wilson

"As we move forward, we must strive for progress over perfection while we continue to focus on what matters most: meeting the needs of our students and staff, our parents and our entire community of learners. We do this by asking questions such as 'What is working well? What is not working?' We create an environment where long-standing assumptions about when, where and how

instruction occurs can be challenged by asking respectful questions and at the same time nurturing a culture of collaboration, trust and learning." (from "Progress Over Perfection," as published in the February issue of *School Administrator*)

AASA Coronavirus Resources

AASA continues to work with federal officials and members of Congress to influence legislation and policy concerning the coronavirus pandemic and its effect on schools. The AASA website offers school leaders updated information and resources from the federal levels, including Congress, the CDC, the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture. [Click here](#) to see a list of resources and information provided by AASA.

Join AASA today and become part of a supported community of school leaders nationwide who advocate for public education. AASA, The School Superintendents Association, is the only national organization that represents and promotes the concerns of chief school administrators across the nation! **See the AASA website, <http://www.aasa.org>, for details or contact the PASA office.**



LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER

Registration remains open for the first ever virtual AASA National Conference on Education, which will be held over two days, **February 18-19**.

The virtual format will provide convenience and safety for participants while still providing access to data, research and best practices shared among other superintendents and school districts across the nation.

This year's conference will focus on "**Social Emotional Learning: Focusing on the Whole Child**" and include keynote presenters **George Couros**, a worldwide leader in the area of innovation and innovation as a human endeavor, and **Priscilla Chan**, co-founder and co-CEO of the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

While the format of the event has changed, you can expect world-class content focused on three main tracks: **social emotional learning, equity and school reopening/digital learning**. Sessions will focus on actionable takeaways from inspiring, experienced speakers, and many will have optional chat boxes and live Q&A.

In addition to keynotes and sessions, the conference will include Ed Chats, a social media lounge, a virtual exhibit hall, School of the Future presentations, and networking features built into the virtual platform that help you build your network, private message other attendees – and more.

See the AASA website, <https://nce.aasa.org>, for registration information and program details.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"In times of uncertainty, we often look to leaders for answers. And there's a lot of pressure on leaders to act like they know what they're talking about and have answers. But the strongest leaders are quick to admit what they don't know. 'I don't know this; I don't know that.' And it's not like, 'Oh, I don't know that. Let me get back to you tomorrow in e-mail with an answer.' It's 'No, we don't have an answer for this right now.' Communicating, here's what we don't know but have to figure out. Not only does this increase your authenticity as a leader, it establishes a collective learning agenda." – Liz Wiseman, researcher and author, interviewed by retired superintendent Suzette Lovely, from "The Default to Assumptions and Answers: A Conversation with Liz Wiseman," as published in the February issue of *School Administrator*

MEMBER NEWS

REGION 3

Dr. Randal Lutz, superintendent of the Baldwin-Whitehall SD, recently received a new five-year contract running from Feb. 1, 2021 through Jan. 31, 2026.

REGION 6

Shawn Algoe has resigned from his position as superintendent of the Keystone SD. Algoe has been a member of the PASA Legislative Committee.

REGION 9

Brice Benson has been appointed superintendent of the Smethport Area SD, effective July 9. He currently serves as principal of the Smethport Area Junior-Senior High School. Benson will replace **David London**, who is retiring. London is in his third year as superintendent.

REGION 15

Dr. Kevin C. Roberts, Jr. has been appointed superintendent of the Big Spring SD, effective July 1. He currently serves as the district's assistant superintendent. Roberts will replace **Dr. Richard Fry**, who is retiring after 16 years as superintendent.

REGION 21

Thomas Parker, superintendent of the Allentown City SD, has announced he is retiring from the position to accept a position at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in Flint, Mich, effective May 1. The foundation supports nonprofits in the area, as well as in England and South Africa. In his resignation letter, Parker said his role will be to strengthen education in Flint.

REGION 22

Dr. William Gretzula, superintendent of the Pennsbury SD, has announced he will retire at the end of the 2020-21 school year. He is in his fifth year as superintendent.

REGION 23

Dr. William Shirk, superintendent of the Pottsgrove SD, has announced he will retire at the end of the school year. He has served as the district's superintendent since 2017.

Dr. Susan Lloyd, superintendent of the Owen J. Roberts SD, has announced her retirement as of July 1, 2021. This is her third year in the position.

REGION 27

Dr. Jeffrey Fuller is resigning from his position as superintendent of the Freedom Area SD, effective April 11, to accept a position as Director of the Bureau of School Support in the PA Department of Education. Fuller is the 2020-21 PASA Past-President.

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.")

PASA CALENDAR

All programs and meetings through March are virtual.

See the PASA web site at www.pasa-net.org.

FEBRUARY

15 PASA office closed

18-19 AASA National Conference on Education (virtual)

MARCH

4-5 National Superintendent Certification Program

10 Winter Webinar Series #3

11 Superintendent Forum: Leading Change

29 PASA Leadership Forum with Bill Daggett

APRIL

2 PASA office closed

7 Professional Development Committee meeting

8 Superintendent Forum: Leading Change

14 Winter Webinar Series #4

15 Advocacy Committee meeting

Board of Governors' meeting

**Career
Center**

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.)