PASANOWSEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR
2022 PA SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

PASA is now seeking nominations for 2022 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year. The Pennsylvania award is part of the National Superintendent of the Year program, sponsored by First Student, AIG Retirement Services and AASA. The program pays tribute to the talent and vision of the men and women who lead the nation’s public schools. This is the 35th year for the national award program.

CRITERIA

Each candidate for Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year will be judged on the following criteria:

Leadership for Learning – creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.

Communication – strength in both personal and organizational communication.

Professionalism – constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.

Community Involvement – active participation in local community activities and an understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

ELIGIBILITY

Any Pennsylvania superintendent who plans to continue as a superintendent may be nominated. The program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents. It is not recognition of service at retirement or a program to reward current state or national leaders.

Additional criteria for Pennsylvania nominee eligibility include the following:

• The individual must be both a PASA and AASA member.
• The individual must have served as a sitting superintendent with a commission for at least five years and in his/her current district in Pennsylvania for at least two years.
• The individual must intend to continue serving as a superintendent in the year in which he/she will be the PA Superintendent of the Year.

NOMINATIONS

All nominations will be accepted online only via the AASA Superintendent of the Year website no later than Friday, July 23. Those seeking to nominate a Pennsylvania superintendent must first register on the AASA Superintendent of the Year website. (NOTE: Self-nomination is not permitted.) AASA will notify candidates of their nomination.

See Supt of the Year, page 4

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Planning to retire this year or in the near future?

Before you retire, remember to update your contact information and plan to renew your PASA membership as a Retired Member beginning October 1 for only $50! Contact Jolene Zelinski for assistance at jolenez@pasa-net.org. We want you to stay connected!

In addition, PASA offers to school districts an Interim Superintendent Service in an effort to provide continuity of leadership in school districts due to the departure of the superintendent. We maintain a list of retired superintendents who are available to serve on an interim basis during a district’s search for a permanent superintendent replacement. When contacted, we share a list of individuals who are available to serve on an interim basis in the geographical location of the requesting district and help them conduct interviews if requested.

If you are a retiring superintendent and would like to be part of this service, please contact Deborah Banks (dbanks@pasa-net.org) or Mark DiRocco (mdirocco@pasa-net.org) in the PASA office.
PASA Members:
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 pasal@pasa-net.org. Copy deadline is the 1st of each month.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DR. MARK DIROCCO

INCREASE DESPERATELY NEEDED TO SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBSIDY

PASA has been part of the Pennsylvania Schools Work Campaign since its inception, and we have participated in many of the campaign’s advocacy efforts. The Campaign represents more than 30 associations and organizations who support public education. Recently, PASA assisted the Campaign in organizing 6 simultaneous press conferences around the state involving 26 superintendents and many other education stakeholders to advocate for increased subsidies to our public schools.

I was able to join a cohort of four superintendents at the Williamsport School District that morning hosted by Dr. Tim Bowers, superintendent of the district. He was joined by Dr. Eric Briggs, superintendent of Canton Area School District, Daphne Bowers, superintendent of the Montgomery Area School District, and Mike Pawlik, superintendent of East Lycoming School District.

As I listened to these four school leaders talk about the funding situations in their respective districts, I was moved by their compassion and concern for the educational future of the children they serve. Each superintendent provided specific examples of how underfunding by the state and federal government has caused serious complications in their ability to adequately educate their students. They pierced through the usual political rhetoric around school funding to give specific examples of how the lack of critical revenues is negatively impacting their students. I am sure the same concerns were expressed by the superintendents at the other five locations that morning.

One of the topics that resonated throughout the press conference was the continued escalation of special education costs.

On November 29, 1975 the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was signed into law by President Gerald Ford and became federal law for all public schools in America. In adopting this civil rights legislation, Congress opened public school doors for millions of children with disabilities and created a new national commitment to ensuring that children with disabilities have the opportunity to attend their local public schools. The law guaranteed access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to every child with a disability. Since 1975, we have gone from serving nearly 1.8 million children with disabilities in public schools to more than 7.5 million children with disabilities in 2018-19.

This amazing and historic achievement for special needs students has been maligned by the woeful lack of federal and state funding to school districts for special education programs and services. When the IDEA law was enacted in 1975, Congress agreed to provide up to 40% of the cost to educate students identified as needing special education. In what can only be termed as “disgraceful,” Congress has never provided more than 18% of the cost of special education and has typically paid much less since the law took effect.

Unfortunately, the state of Pennsylvania has not been a better partner, with only about 21% of the cost of special education being allocated to our schools in the annual state budget. In 2018-19, Pennsylvania school districts paid 72.6% of the cost of special education while the state only paid 21.7% and the federal government only paid 5.7%. Approximately $5 billion was paid by local taxpayers for special education and just $1.3 billion by the state and federal government combined.

Special Education is a federal mandate that has been augmented with additional mandates by the state, yet the bulk of these programs are unfairly being funded by local school district residents. The federal government has not kept their part of the bargain, and the state needs to increase its share of this funding to fulfill its obligation to special needs students. Local school districts should only be paying about 1/3 the cost of special education. As each year passes, rising costs for special education services to our students are mostly borne by local school districts that are already struggling financially.

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 State Budget & Finance News

State Revenue: Pennsylvania collected $4.0 billion in General Fund revenue in April, which was $28.2 million, or 0.7 percent, more than anticipated. Fiscal year-to-date General Fund collections total $32.7 billion, which is $1.3 billion, or 4.2 percent, above estimate.

Special Education & Charter Schools: Research for Action has developed an informational video outlining the problems with the formula that drives funding to charter and cyber charter schools for special education. Click here to view the video.

Pupil Transportation Costs: A study released by the Center for Rural PA shows that school enrollment ridership decreased between 4.6 – 5.0 percent from 2013-14 to 2017-18, with an average 2.2 percent decrease in enrollment and 0.4 percent decrease in ridership statewide. The study also found that rural public school students relied most heavily on public school transportation, and per student transportation costs statewide increased 10.7 percent.

Federal Income Recovery & Infrastructure Plan: The Biden Administration has released the second part of its Build Back Better economic recovery and infrastructure plan that includes $731 billion in education and child care funding, along with other school-based investments.

Legislative News

Session Schedule: Work at the Capitol continues to ramp up, with both chambers in session at least three days every week in June and continuing until a state budget is finalized.

Bill Action: The House and Senate Education Committees continue to discuss and move education bills for floor consideration, likely as a way to vet education issues in advance of developing an omnibus School Code bill to be considered with the state budget.

COMING UP

With the June 30 state budget deadline only seven weeks away, and week-long breaks for both the May primary and Memorial Day, both the House and Senate are ramping up bill consideration, while budget negotiations begin behind the scenes. However, what also continues to dominate time are ongoing hearings and press conferences about elections and the pandemic, two political issues that continue to dominate attention in both chambers, particularly within the Republican majority. It is that political divide that will drive legislative activity and budget negotiations this spring, and when polarizing politics, not good policy, dominates the day, anything can happen. Stay tuned for the latest information by following us on Twitter @PASASupts.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

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The federal stimulus dollars will assist districts in helping special needs students to recover from time lost during the pandemic. Additional tutoring and a range of services from physical therapy to occupational therapy will be utilized in the next two to three years to assist special needs students. Unfortunately, the federal stimulus funds will not help districts with the long-term issue of properly funding special education programs and services when the federal stimulus dollars are gone.

The PA Schools Work Campaign has asked the Governor and the General Assembly to provide a modest $200 million special education subsidy increase in the 2021-2022 budget. PASA supports this effort, and we ask all of our members to advocate for this much needed subsidy increase as the final budget negotiations unfold over the next few weeks.

State News

PSERS Contributions: The FBI currently is investigating PSERS operations following disclosure that the system erroneously reported investment earnings that kept employee contribution rates flat. To date, the PSERS board has revised its investment performance returns, a move that will increase the contribution rate to 6.34 percent, effective July 1 through at least June 30, 2024.

Pennsylvania Delegation: The U.S. Census Bureau recently confirmed that Pennsylvania will lose one of its congressional seats and one of its Electoral College votes by the time the 2022 midterm elections arrive. The commonwealth currently has 18 seats in the U.S. House. Census estimates show population gains in south-central and southeast PA, with declines elsewhere throughout the state.

National News

Student Speech Case: The U.S. Supreme Court has heard arguments in a PA case that began with a Mahanoy Area School District cheerleader’s profanity-laden post on social media concerning her team status and her subsequent suspension from the team. The student’s legal team claims that her free speech rights had been violated, while the district deemed the post disruptive to cheerleader morale. The case could have implications for student speech outside the school environment.

School Board Member Censure: Another Supreme Court case soon to be heard concerns whether school boards and other local government entities may censure speech by one of their members without violating that person’s First Amendment rights. Although the case concerns actions by a board member in a Texas community college, the case could have implications in K-12 governance.

Title IX Discrimination: The Biden Administration recently released a memo that states Title IX protects students from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, a reversal of previous policy. The position sets the stage for possible state-federal legal battles over interpretations of Title IX.
SUPT OF THE YEAR
continued from page 1

APPLICATIONS
Those nominated by July 23 and found eligible according to the established criteria will receive from PASA a state application to be completed and sent to PASA no later than Friday, August 27. (Nominees will not complete the AASA online application.)

SELECTION PROCESS
After August 27 the PASA Elections Committee and the PASA President will review all applications and recommend to the PASA Board of Governors a minimum of two (2) finalists but not more than three (3) for consideration as 2022 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year. The finalist who receives the majority vote (at least 51 percent) will be considered the Pennsylvania recipient of the award.

The individual selected will be notified no later than October 1 and then will be asked to complete the formal, online AASA application for National Superintendent of the Year by the November 1 deadline.

STATE AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION
The 2022 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year will be recognized and honored during a special luncheon to be planned and coordinated with input from the recipient.

The 2022 National Superintendent of the Year will be chosen from among four finalists selected from the state winners and will be announced at the 2022 AASA National Conference on Education in Nashville (February 17-19) during a ceremony during which all state Superintendents of the Year are recognized and honored. In addition to other awards, a $10,000 scholarship is presented each year in the name of the National Superintendent of the Year to a student in the high school from which the superintendent graduated. The four national finalists receive U.S. Savings Bonds.

Dr. Khalid Mumin, who has been serving as superintendent in the Reading SD, is the 2021 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year and was one of four finalists for National Superintendent of the Year.

Questions about the Superintendent of the Year application process may be directed to PASA at pasa@pasa-net.org.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
“Often, the biggest challenge associated with any leadership position is changing human behavior. If leaders take the time to listen and ask probing questions to help their followers find their true north, they can reinforce them or help modify behavior toward shared values and common goals within the organization.”


COMING IN JUNE...
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2021-22

PASA is working in Harrisburg and throughout the Commonwealth – and AASA is working for you in Washington D.C. – to influence policy, build support for public education, and provide school administrators with both the information and professional development they need – now more than ever.

The Zoom briefings and numerous alerts and emails PASA provided to commissioned officers over the past year concerning guidance and other information focused on the pandemic are just one example of how your professional association seeks to support you with the vital information you need to manage your district, whether in a crisis or during a “normal” school year – and will be vital as school districts develop education strategies moving forward.

In addition, legal advice and assistance for commissioned officers, weekly updates, and professional learning programs that meet your needs are all an essential component of PASA’s mission: supporting school district leaders.

Membership in both PASA, your professional state organization, and in AASA, the only national organization representing the interests of school district superintendents, is vital for you personally, for the profession and for public education. And never has it been more important – and valuable – for school leaders to be part of their professional associations.

Recognizing that this is a unique time in Pennsylvania, the PASA Board of Governors has again frozen membership dues in all categories for 2021-22. This ensures you will receive the same services and support next year at no additional cost.

Watch for your membership renewal notice to arrive by mail in early June!

The PASA membership year runs from October 1 through September 30.
SUMMER IS COMING
BY DR. JOHN BELL, 2020-21 PASA PRESIDENT

Is it summer yet?
It’s ok if you are not-so-secretly wishing for summer vacation to get here fast. In a typical school year, May and June are usually hectic and exciting with many end-of-year activities, including field days, awards nights and the biggest night of the year - graduation. If you are like me, you always try to savor this time of year because it makes you feel good about your efforts, your students’ accomplishments and your profession.

However, it is understandable if you crave summer more than usual in what has been the craziest year of our careers.

I thought you might like a few inspirational quotes to help you get through the last leg of this marathon we’ve been running:

“A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities and optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties.” – Harry S. Truman

“A person who says it can’t be done shouldn’t interrupt the person who is doing it.” – Chinese proverb

“People often say that motivation doesn’t last. Well, neither does bathing. That’s why we recommend it daily.” – Zig Ziglar

“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.” – Albert Einstein

I tip my hat to you and your leadership teams. We have been tested in the last 14 months like never before – and we have succeeded! Everything may not have worked exactly as planned, but education isn’t alone in this respect. Think about what the federal and state governments went through, as well as every industry in the private sector. How we live and work were turned upside down last spring, and some aspects will never be the same.

Here are some questions to ponder with your leadership teams as you look to wrap up this year, recharge your batteries over the summer, and prepare for next year:

What old things will we start doing again?
What old things aren’t coming back?
What pandemic-era things will we incorporate into our post-pandemic operations?
What new things will we introduce next year after having a year of great reflection?

Getting your entire team to think about these questions will engage your team’s total brain power in the goal of building a better school district in the future.

Last month, I wrote about legendary General Electric CEO Jack Welch’s best-selling book Winning. This month, I want to introduce you to Cut to the Chase and 99 Other Rules to Liberate Yourself and Gain Back the Gift of Time, a book by Stuart Levine, the former CEO of Dale Carnegie & Associates. This book will show you how to be more effective at work and make the best use of your most precious resource – your time.

The key questions he attempts to answer in the book include:

How can I get more done?
How can I stay focused?
How can I condense my workday so that I can become more successful and still spend more time with the people I love?

Levine says that “successful individuals are the ones who make the best use of their time. They approach each task with clarity, focus and purpose. They prioritize. They don’t allow others to waste their time. They understand the importance of refueling their batteries outside of work.”

As we look to press the reset button on how our organizations operate, I recommend reading Cut to the Chase because it will help you and your organization be more productive.

Dr. Bell is superintendent of the Delaware Valley SD.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our PASA Sponsors at all levels. Contributions from our Sponsors allows PASA to continue a strong and positive professional development program for school administrators across the Commonwealth. CLICK HERE to see more information about our PASA Sponsors and PASA Business-Level Sponsors.

Although PASA does not promote or endorse any product or service offered by our sponsors, we are pleased to share information about what they offer.

Also, the PASA website includes a page listing COVID-related resources and information offered by several PASA sponsors. Check it out here.
HAS THE OLD STATUS QUO BECOME THE NEW CLASSROOM FOE?

BY STEPHEN RODRIGUEZ, CAUCUS PRESIDENT

Let’s be honest: as difficult as the last 15 months have been, there are a few things that we don’t miss. Student misbehavior is a big one. The constant pressure of achievement tests is another. It’s led many educators to wonder, “Has the pandemic given us all a chance to ‘reset’ in a way we’ve never experienced before?”

While most parents and community members are focused on getting “back to normal,” more and more educators, especially in urban environments, are hoping to change some of our old practices, especially the ineffective ones.

After all, so much is different now! We have more technology and bandwidth than ever before and our teachers and parents have been communicating at a level no one thought possible.

As we literally have been in one another’s homes at times through Zoom or GoogleMeet or some other software, there are a lot of good takeaways from the past 15 months that we don’t want to lose by going back to the status quo. We also don’t want to get caught up in those bad behavior cycles that can sometimes take on a life of their own, most keenly at the secondary levels.

How can we be sure to step into our “new normal” without re-adopting the negative parts of the “old normal”? Here are some steps we can take:

- Use dynamic teams. Perhaps most importantly, our professional and support staff have begun working as a team in ways completely unheard of before the pandemic. Daily emails, weekly virtual planning sessions, and an emphasis on curriculums and pacing have become the norm. No longer will we wait for the monthly department meetings. No longer do we need to think about improving our programming for students for the semester or school year. With dynamic teams, our students can benefit from change almost immediately.

We need to see this time as an opportunity to lead with a “new normal” approach and avoid the old status quo. That will move our schools and our students forward.

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 to read more about it.
As I am sure many of you did earlier this month, I reached out to the teachers in my district during Teacher Appreciation Week with words of gratitude for a job well-done during what is arguably the most challenging year in their professional careers.

Although Teacher Appreciation Week originated to express thankfulness to our teaching staff, I would argue that if districts are working properly, all employees are teachers to varying degrees. We all have much to share with those around us in our daily work lives. As superintendents and district leaders, what steps can we take to make sure that we are developing those around us so that everyone has the knowledge and skills necessary to be teachers within our organization?

As we all strive to be lead learners and set a positive example for everyone within our school district and community, professional development can and should be a key component in our course of action. As highlighted during Dr. Bill Daggett’s keynote at this year’s PASA Leadership Forum, our professional development planning should be tailored to meet the ever-changing landscape of our districts. What is the current culture for learning in our districts? How can/should/do we lead and learn during these challenging times?

Michael Fullan uses the adage “go slow to go fast” to refer to leading for change. Over the last year, school district leaders were forced to make snap decisions in the face of COVID-19. Many of us tried to make effective decisions in a way that would allow our districts to be timely and responsive yet not miss opportunities to slow down, connect, learn and grow. This balance of “go slow to go fast” is key. As Fullan states, “If you don’t change and adapt, you become obsolete and extinct.” As leaders, it is essential that we find this balance in order to move our districts forward.

I hope that all of you will consider bringing your entire administrative team to this summer’s Virtual Forum for School Administrators, which is structured around Michael Fullan’s Leading in a Culture of Change. By using Fullan’s book as a framework for the course, leadership teams will have the opportunity to engage with other professionals from across the state as they work together to strengthen their own professional learning as well as the structure of their organizations.

As all of us begin to wind down from this challenging school year, it is critical that we take time to reflect and plan for the upcoming school year. I am looking forward to joining my own leadership team at this summer’s forum and using this experience as a springboard for discussion, brainstorming, and planning. I am eager to discuss all five of Fullan’s themes from Leading in a Culture of Change, especially those focused on the power of building knowledge and developing relationships, both of which are essential to move organizations forward. I look forward to meeting other leaders from across the state as you work on developing knowledge and relationships too.

Dr. Frankelli is superintendent of the Palmerton Area SD and a member of the PASA Professional Development Committee.
It’s been a long time, but I sometimes think back to my days teaching advanced English grammar and composition to high school juniors. After a few years, I recognized that the traditional way of explaining the ins and outs of rhetoric and the laws of usage more likely led to droopy eyelids than anything else. I needed to think outside the box, not do away with helping students understand that words and their order matter, that sentence structure and punctuation was important and often consequential, that how you say something is as important as what you mean, but rather to take a new tack.

I did some interesting word plays, such as writing on the board (remember those days?) the following sentence, something my much younger self heard before many a church dinner: “Lord, bless this food to our bodies which we are about to eat.”

Clearly, we were meant to be cannibals.

Then I took some inspiration from Lewis Carroll and developed a new way of understanding the intricacies and many complications of the English language by inventing a new language: Markeltarf.

The next sentence on the board went this way: “The dorpodle scolocked with a timeous fople yord.” I would say, “What is the subject of this sentence?” and would ask my students to explain their reason. The point was they didn’t have to actually see a recognizable word to know how it was being used – and they could tell from the word order that, yes, this WAS a sentence, dorpodle is the subject and it is scolocking. Language fundamentals 101.

That works with policy too. You really don’t have to dive very far down the rhetoric hole to know that “school choice” is a euphemism for vouchers, that “school reform” means more requirements are coming, that “sufficient resources” used in tandem with “public schools have” translates to “public schools have more than enough money and are wasting it,” and that “students should know” means yet another instructional mandate. Policy fundamentals 101. You don’t even have to understand words like “dorpodle” or “yord” to get it.

Words matter. What they really mean and how they are used matters.

Now lawmakers and the governor are getting ready to tackle the 2021-22 state budget and likely an omnibus School Code bill, among others, with plenty of amped-up political rhetoric blooming like dandelions after the rain. The Capitol has seen and heard a lot of whiffling, burbling and frumiousness over the past year, and that isn’t going away, a reality that will complicate reaching compromise on difficult issues.

The question will be whether some of this rhetoric will take a back seat to getting positive things accomplished for Pennsylvania and public education or whether there will be more vorpal blades going snicker-snack against their manxome foes in an endless cycle.

One thing you can count on is that PASA will work with all legislators to provide an honest picture of the good work public schools are doing and the tools they need to meet the challenges ahead. Let us hope that advocacy with clear messages slays the Jabberwocky of political one-upmanship and instead leads to compromises that will be good for the commonwealth, for its citizens and for our kids and their future. That would truly be a frabjous day!

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**Jabberwocky**

by Lewis Carroll

‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”
He chortled in his joy.

‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.
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
Approved for 40 PIL/Act 45 Hours
(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

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.
WHERE DO WE SEE THE STRONG WOMEN IN OUR LIVES?

BY LYNN FUINI-HETTEN AND DR. TINA KANE

This past Sunday on Mother’s Day, my younger sister wanted to take a photo of the moms after we finished dinner. I resisted… “I don’t have any makeup on… I am wearing sweats…. I was in the rain grilling the steaks.” I had all these reasons I didn’t want to participate in a group photo. In the end, I sat down and smiled. I figured since the photo wasn’t taken on my phone, I probably wouldn’t even see it.

Monday morning, when I awoke to start the new week, there was a new text message with the photo sent to our family group text thread. The caption read, “Blessed to have these strong women in our lives.” A few lovely hearts punctuated the statement. It was the picture my sister took on Mother’s Day. While I saw a less than perfect photo, my sister reminded me to look deeper, beyond the surface.

You have likely heard or seen this quote, “Here’s to Strong Women, May We Know Them, May We Be Them, May We Raise Them.” It applies to our personal lives as well as our professional lives.

**May We Know Them**

Who are the strong women in our lives? What strong female leaders have you engaged with this year? Think about your own personal and professional network. Is she a neighbor who just always seems to have everything together? Is she your accountability partner who reminds you to drink more water or exercise? Is she your confidant colleague on your team or in another local group? Is she your professional learning network. Take a few minutes this week to think about these women in your life and reach out to them and thank them for being strong for you and lifting you up! You never know: she may need a pick-me up too.

**May We Be Them**

This year, perhaps more than others, we have all needed strength and fortitude to successfully navigate the challenges as a result of COVID-19. The endless health department guidance documents and revisions, the challenge and diverse opinions of staff, board member questions, and community member requests and demands, the increased expenses associated with cleaning and social distancing, and the list goes on and on. Every piece of guidance led to new challenges and additional problem solving. We had to be strong for ourselves and strong for each other, both in our personal lives and professionally.

Let’s face it, we needed to care for our own families’ safety and well-being while devising plans to safely reopen our schools for our learners. Now, over a year later, we still need to harness our inner strength to carry us through this school year.

**May We Raise Them**

Now more than ever, the young girls and women in our lives need us: the students we interact with in our schools, the student teachers just starting their careers, our veteran teachers, aspiring leaders, and seasoned colleagues. The future is uncertain and the aftereffects of COVID-19 are unknown. So we must nurture the little women in our lives, and foster their strength, for they are the future women leaders. Whether they be our daughters, nieces, friends, or new and emerging co-workers, we owe it to them to pass on our expertise, knowledge and strategies for being strong, capable and self-sufficient personally and/or professionally.

Guiding the women in our lives will instill self-confidence in them, which is the pillar in which strong women are forged. Healthy self-confidence embodies a positive attitude, leading to productive skill and ability development. Through each experience, the women in our lives can build upon realistic expectations and goals and grow to become more capable and strong in their personal and professional lives.

**May We Remain Them**

The summer is on the horizon, and we need to be intentional about refreshing our minds, bodies and souls. While planning for your summer and preparing for the next school year, I invite you to consider how you will remain strong and become stronger? What role will you play in strengthening your team and the other leaders around you? How have you mentored other female leaders to help them become stronger?

Remember those women who came before us and all of the burdens and challenges they have overcome for women in leadership. We owe it to them and our future little women to perpetuate strength, grow and give back.

Lynn Fuini-Hetten is superintendent of the Salisbury Township SD and Caucus President. Dr. Tina Kane is superintendent of the Marple Newtown SD and Caucus Secretary.

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!**
Advocacy Day

PASA, PARSS, and the PA Principals Association joined together to coordinate a Leadership Team Virtual Advocacy Day on Monday, May 26 for school leaders to speak directly with their state senators and representatives. More than 100 school leaders participated in the advocacy event, meeting virtually with lawmakers and legislative staff to discuss important education issues affecting public schools.

Thank you to all who participated!

Press Conferences on State Funding

PASA and PASBO assisted the PA Schools Work Campaign to hold several simultaneous press conferences on May 6 in six school districts around the state.

Local school leaders and education advocates across the state gathered in their communities to call for greater state investment in schools and to highlight the difficult decisions local leaders face in balancing school budgets. Superintendents were joined by other administrators and education policy experts to call on the state legislature to at least increase state funding to cover rising mandated costs this school year and the next – costs that even state legislative leaders admit should not be paid for with one-time federal dollars. 26 school districts were represented during the press conferences.

Events took place in the following regions (hosting districts identified):
- Lancaster/York: Penn Manor (video)
- Pittsburgh: Franklin Regional (video)
- Allentown/Lehigh Valley: Bethlehem Area (video)
- Northeastern PA: Abington Heights
- North-Central PA: Williamsport Area
- Philadelphia Area – Bensalem (video)

Decades of underfunding for basic education, special education, and career and technical education – including last year’s flat funding – have continually weakened the fiscal foundation of our schools, school officials said. The pandemic delivered a one-two punch to Pennsylvania schools already facing a challenging task of budgeting for the 2021-22 school year: a drop in local revenues during the COVID-driven economic slowdown and a spike in costs to educate students and keep them safe during this unprecedented crisis.

In the current school year, state funding for basic education and special education was flat. School districts are being forced to cover state and federal mandated costs that will spike $1.15 billion over this school year and next according to estimates modeled by the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO). School leaders called on the state to increase investments to cover these rising costs.

School districts are required to finalize their 2021-22 school budgets by the end of May.

“These events in regions across the state bring attention to the challenges that schools face to ensure that all students have the resources they need to succeed,” said PASA Executive Director Dr. Mark DiRocco. “With students back in the classroom, schools are focusing on getting them back on track. But Pennsylvania ranks 44th in the country in the state’s budget share of education costs, and this affects urban districts, suburban districts, and rural districts alike. While federal relief funds are being used for one-time COVID costs, the state must provide enough funding for ongoing schools costs that will be with districts long after the federal stimulus dollars are gone – including special education and career and technical education. This will allow districts to keep pace with inflation and give them the ability to invest in our kids and their future.”

PASA Advocacy & Information

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

• We continue to work with our lobbyist and other education associations on many issues, including the need for charter/cyber charter reform and the importance of adequate state funding to comply with ongoing state and federal mandates, as well as pandemic-related issues. In addition, PASA provides comments to the House and Senate education committees on education bills slated for committee consideration.
• PASA sent to lawmakers and the governor’s office last month the latest issue of PASA Points, a monthly update sent to Pennsylvania lawmakers highlighting education issues and priorities of school leaders across Pennsylvania. The April edition focused on the historic escalation of special education costs and the need for increased special education subsidies.
• PASA continues to communicate with the PDE and Department of Health concerning member questions and state guidance.
• 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.
• 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.

In addition, PASA continues to update the coronavirus webpage and provide additional education news and information through the weekly Update on Mondays and The PASA Flyer.

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!
COVID Cases and Extracurriculars

The recent change in the PDE FAQ on temporary school closures due to COVID-19 outbreaks affects all in-person school activities, including away athletic or extra-curricular events. Please see the FAQ question and answer below:

If a school building meets the case thresholds to temporarily close, can any student population still attend in person?

When building closure is required, the school must suspend all in-person activities, including athletic and extracurricular activities, associated with that school - regardless of location (e.g. “away” games). This allows public health staff the necessary time to complete case investigations and contact tracing, and to provide the school with other appropriate public health advice like cleaning and disinfecting. Click here for the Guidance and FAQ.

Event Capacity Changes

On May 11 the Wolf Administration announced that event and gathering maximum occupancy limits will be increased to 50 percent for indoor events and gatherings and 75 percent for outdoor events and gatherings effective Monday, May 17. Currently, maximum occupancy is 25 percent for indoor events and gatherings and 50 percent for outdoor events and gatherings, regardless of venue size and only if attendees and workers are able to comply with the 6-foot physical distancing requirement.

According to the Governor’s Office, this update will not prevent municipalities, school districts, restaurants and venues from continuing and implementing stricter mitigation efforts. Based on current CDC guidance, social distancing is strongly recommended for municipalities, school districts, restaurants, and venues.

Lifting Mitigation Orders

The Wolf Administration announced earlier this month that mitigation orders except masking will be lifted on Memorial Day. The current order requiring Pennsylvanians to wear masks will be lifted when 70% of Pennsylvanians age 18 and older are fully vaccinated. Face coverings are required to be worn indoors and outdoors if you are away from your home. In accordance with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance, fully vaccinated Pennsylvanians are not required to wear a mask during certain activities. The announcement also stated that “these updates will not prevent municipalities and school districts from continuing and implementing stricter mitigation efforts” and that the governor’s Proclamation of Disaster Emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic remains in place.

As of May 10, Pennsylvania has administered first doses of vaccine to 52.6% of its entire population, and the state ranks 10th among all 50 states for first doses administered by percentage of population. There were 1,023 additional positive cases of COVID-19, in addition to 1,376 new cases reported Sunday, May 9, for a two-day total of 2,399 additional positive cases of COVID-19, bringing the statewide total to 1,174,687.

Other Guidance, Research and News Updates...

• The Food and Drug Administration on May 12 said children 12 to 15 years old are now eligible to receive a key COVID-19 vaccine, as the agency on Monday expanded its emergency use authorization for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

• The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced a new ARP-funded program to expand the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) to cover the summer months, a program that will deliver approximately $375 per eligible child. The USDA also has extended waivers from some school nutrition regulations through June 2022.

• The Biden Administration is directing the Federal Emergency Planning Agency (FEMA) to fully reimburse schools for specific COVID-expenses, including cleaning supplies and PPE still in use that were purchased in 2020 and those purchased after January 21, COVID testing and screening, and compensation for workers preventing virus spread after January 21.

• The U.S. Department of Education has released the interim final rule on American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding. The rule stipulates that, as a requirement for receiving the remaining 20% of ARP funds earmarked for learning recovery efforts, LEAs will be required to develop and submit to state education agencies a plan for the use of the ARP dollars as well as a plan showing how they will ensure a safe return to school learning environment for students and staff.

• Late last month the CDC released interim public health recommendations for fully vaccinated people, including recommendations on indoor and outdoor gatherings, wearing masks, and travel.

• The PDE last month launched the next phase of an initiative that helps school leaders and educators address student learning loss during the pandemic. The new toolkit and professional learning series, “Accelerated Learning through an Integrated System of Support,” provides to school leaders in preparing for the upcoming school year a voluntary process and research that addresses academic and emotional well-being of students.

• The CDC last month released updated guidance on when and how often to clean and/or disinfect surfaces for COVID prevention. Although the agency continues to reiterate that regular cleaning practices can reduce the risk of infection, the guidance now asserts that risk of this type of infection is low, and that hand washing is the most effective way to prevent any possible infection from surfaces. The guidance includes a number of best practices that are beneficial to school leaders as they consider whether and how to allocate resources to surface cleaning and disinfection.

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. 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.
Each month, PASA, in coordination with the Technology Committee and CoSN (Consortium for School Networking), will publish a monthly technology-focused news item of interest to members of PASA.

**TOPIC: ASSURING ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL**

**The EmpowerED Superintendent eWebinar Series**

The free recording of the recent May 10 EmpowerED Superintendent Webinar, co-hosted by CoSN, AASA and edWeb.net, and sponsored by ClassLink, is now available.

“Creating and Leading Equitable, Effective Learning Systems – Assuring Accessibility for All” features three superintendents – Dr. Nick Polyak (Leyden High School District 212, IL), Dr. Michael Salvatore (Vice President, Kean University and former superintendent, Long Branch Public Schools, NJ) and Marlon Styles (Middletown City School District, OH) – engaged in an interactive conversation to share how they are leading the complex issues involved in ensuring accessibility for all within their school districts. The presenters articulated and illustrated five compelling steps for addressing accessibility through shared resources and real-world video examples of successful strategies that have been used to assure accessibility for all.

Free registration for the recording of the May 10 webinar is available online.

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/ a day or two after the initial live broadcast.

**CoSN Resources – Accessibility Toolkit and One-Page Guide**

As learning environments continue their increasing transitions toward digital learning settings, it is critical that all schools assure that an equitable, effective learning ecosystem exists everywhere, at all times, for all students.

CoSN is pleased to provide a Digital Accessibility Toolkit that offers resources, tips and information for state and district leaders on how to ensure that accessibility is part of the educational equation. CoSN’s EmpowerED Superintendent Critical Focus Area One Pager on Accessibility provides school leaders with five compelling steps to take now to ensure accessibility for all.

**COMMUNICATIONS TIP OF THE MONTH**

“Administrators need to be sure their communication projects confidence, thoughtfulness and empathy, both for those who are ready to resume normal life and those who may have more anxiety about doing so. These messages should include enough detailed information to be actionable for faculty, staff and families but not so ‘in the weeds’ they cause confusion or anxiety. Once the messages are developed, administrators should practice delivering them so they feel natural in any setting, including Q&A sessions or parent meetings.” – Michael Mittleman, managing director at Finsbury Glover Hering, a strategic communications firm in New York, from “Messaging During the Recess of COVID-19,” as published in the May issue of School Administrator. This month’s issue examines aspects of student grading practices of the past year that may become permanent fixtures.
PASA and PSBA are now seeking relevant and compelling sessions presentations on topics that would appeal to a broad school leader audience during the 2021 PASA/PSBA School Leadership Conference, scheduled for September 27-29 in a new venue – Kalahari Poconos.*

Presentations will be considered in a variety of formats:
* **Traditional Presentation:** The session focuses on a single topic or program, typically including a talk or presentation followed by questions and answers.

* **Roundtable Discussions:** Presenters briefly introduce the idea or issue they wish to explore and then open the discussion for input and exchange of ideas among participants. The purpose of this format is “more discussion, less lecture” and a focus on content delivery.

* **Interactive Presentation:** Interactive sessions provide an extended opportunity for participant engagement (small group discussions, polls, quizzes, etc.).

* **Panel Discussion:** Discussion focuses on a specific topic among a selected group of panelists who share differing perspectives. Panels may not have more than four participants plus a moderator.

* **Inspiration Session Short (20-25 minute) discussion sessions on topics related to best practices or current trends. NO presentation slides or other audiovisual aides should be utilized.

Deadline for RFPs is June 18. Click here for the presentation form.

**NOTE:** Every effort is being made to hold the annual conference in person. We continue to monitor the status of the pandemic and CDC recommendations. A determination will be made by July 7, 2021 as to whether the conference will be held onsite at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions or virtually. Should the event change to a virtual platform, all accepted in-person presentations cannot be held virtually due to time and platform limitations. PSBA and PASA therefore reserve the right to make final determinations regarding virtual presentations.
PASA is sad to report the passing of Lin Moyer, a former PASA and AASA member (along with PASBO and ASBO president) who served as the Assistant Superintendent for Business of the Pottstown SD during a 37-year tenure with the district. Lin, who also served seven years as PASBO executive director, received an AASA Distinguished Service Award in 1982. Our condolences to Lin’s family and friends.

**REGION 3**

Dr. Linda Iverson, superintendent of the Wilkinsburg SD, has announced she will resign from the position, effective at the end of the academic year, to take a position with Greenburgh Central SD in Hartsdale, NY. Iverson has served as the district’s superintendent since 2016.

**REGION 5**

Matt Lane has been appointed superintendent of the General McLane SD, effective July 1. He currently serves as a high school principal in the Fairview SD. Lane will replace Richard Scaletta, who is retiring.

**REGION 7**

Dr. Timothy Scott, superintendent of the Kiski Area SD, has announced his intention to retire at the end of the 2020-21 school year. Tim Cantor has been appointed superintendent of the Ligonier Valley SD, effective in July. He currently serves as the district’s high school principal. He will replace Dr. Christine Oldham, who is retiring.

**REGION 8**

Kenneth Kershenske has been appointed superintendent of the Cambria Heights SD, effective July 1. He currently serves as the district’s Director of Education. Kershenske will replace Michael Strasser, who is retiring.

**REGION 9**

Dr. Harley D. Ramsey has been appointed superintendent of the St. Marys Area SD, effective September 1. He currently serves as the district’s assistant superintendent. Ramsey will replace Dr. G. Brian Toth, who has announced his retirement.

Brock Benson has been appointed executive director of Seneca Highlands IU, effective in mid-August. He currently serves as superintendent of the Kane Area SD. Benson will replace Don Wismar, who is retiring.

**REGION 11**

Dr. Christina Ramsey has been appointed superintendent of the Central Fulton SD, effective July 1. She currently serves as the district’s high school/middle school principal. Ramsey will replace Dr. Michelle Hall, who is retiring.

Fred Foster, superintendent of the Huntingdon Area SD, is resigning his position, effective July 1, to take over the leadership at the local New Day Charter School.

**REGION 12**

Dr. Michael Snell, superintendent of the Central York SD, has announced he will retire this November after 12 years in the position. Snell was the 2018 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year and currently serves on the PASA Professional Development Committee.

**REGION 14**

Dr. Patrick Winters is now serving as superintendent of the Twin Valley SD. He previously served as assistant superintendent in the Exeter Township SD. Winters replaced Dr. Robert Pleis, who has retired.

**REGION 19**

Michael Silsby, superintendent of the Wallenpaupack SD, recently announced his intention to retire, effective September 1. He has served his entire education career (42 years) in the district. Keith Gunuskey, the district’s assistant superintendent, has been appointed to the position following Silsby’s retirement, and Dr. R. Jay Starnes, who is currently the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, will step up to serve as assistant superintendent.

Bryan McGraw is resigning from his position as superintendent of the North Pocono SD to take a position as deputy superintendent of the Jefferson City SD in Missouri.

**REGION 21**

Dr. Robert Steckel, Jr., is the new superintendent of the Whitehall-Coplay SD. He formerly served as assistant superintendent in the Northampton Area SD. Steckel replaces Dr. Lorie Hackett, who has retired.

Dr. Mark Madson has been appointed superintendent of the Parkland SD, effective in July. He previously served as assistant superintendent in the Nazareth Area SD. Madson will replace Richard Sniscak, who is retiring.

**REGION 22**

Dr. John Kopicki has resigned from his position as superintendent of the Central Bucks SD.

**REGION 23**

Robert Copeland, superintendent of the Lower Merion SD, has announced his intention to retire in fall 2021. He has served as the district’s superintendent since 2015.

Dr. David Finnerty has been appointed superintendent of the Pottsgrove SD, effective in July. He currently serves as assistant superintendent in the Twin Valley SD. Finnerty will replace Dr. William Shirk, who is retiring.

**REGION 24**

Dr. Will Stout has been appointed superintendent of the Owen J. Roberts SD, effective July 1. He currently serves as assistant superintendent in the State College Area SD. Stout will replace Dr. Susan Lloyd, who is retiring.

**REGION 25**

Dr. Wagner Marseille has been appointed superintendent of the Wallingford-Swarthmore SD, effective July 1. He currently serves as superintendent in the Cheltenham Township SD. Marseille will replace Dr. Lisa Palmer, who is retiring.

**REGION 29**

Dr. Mark Snyder, superintendent of the Tri-Valley SD, has announced he will retire from the position, effective August 13, after 23 years in the district, the last 13 as superintendent. Snyder also is a member of the PASA Board of Governors.

Dr. Sarah Yoder is now serving as superintendent of the Pottsville Area SD. She previously served as a high school principal in the Schuylkill Valley SD and as superintendent in the Saint Clair Area SD.

Please report member news to PASA at pasanet.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.”)
AASA Advocacy and Governance Conference
Mark your calendars for the AASA Advocacy & Governance Conference on July 13-15, 2021. Revised D.C. guidelines will make it possible to hold the advocacy conference in person this year. Registration information will be available soon.

Call for Proposals
AASA is searching for the “best of the best” presenters to engage attendees of the 2022 National Conference in Education (Feb. 17-19 in Nashville) in conversations around cutting edge trends, issues and solutions in education. Participation as a presenter will help attendees increase their leadership skills and professional competence, provide for an exchange of ideas and solutions and help attendees address the controversial issues facing today’s educators. Click here to submit a proposal.

Leveraging Expertise to Accelerate Learning Post-Pandemic
AASA, The Association of Education Service Agencies (AESA) and Corwin have released a new white paper, Reinvesting and Rebounding: Where the Evidence Points for Accelerating Learning, that covers how, in the age of post-pandemic teaching and learning, educators can leverage their expertise to accelerate student learning and achievement by meticulously deciding what ideas, content, and skills are crucial for our students to understand and practice.

The brief provides dive into tips, tools, and data-driven evidence from education experts that will aid readers in: assessing where to invest funds to maximize learning recovery; determining which action items to implement immediately to support acceleration; determining how best to support the nurturing of teacher morale and student engagement; and understanding how the investments we make today will have a lasting impact on the future of education.

Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools
AASA joined 16 other national education, disability and secular organizations in an April 23 response to the invitation to comment on the American Rescue Plan’s (ARP) Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS) program. The comments were premised on two driving realities: First, a student in poverty is a student in poverty, whether they are enrolled in a public or non-public school. Second, to the extent federal policy appropriately supports and prioritizes federal funding for the neediest of students, the mechanisms of identifying, counting and reporting students in poverty should look the same for both public and non-public schools.

In terms of awarding funding to non-public schools, the groups recommend the following guardrails:
• States must take into consideration how much funding a private school has already received and ensure they have not received funding under the Paycheck Protection Program when determining appropriate award amounts.
• Per-pupil funding for non-public schools from EANS should not exceed the per-pupil funding for public schools from ARP ESSER in the state.
• U.S. Department of Education should issue guidance outlining steps a State can take if only a small number of private schools in a state meet the “significant percentage” criteria. Specifically, the guidance should direct States on how funding in the EANS program can be returned to the GEER program and what limitations the Governor has in allocating the funding to public and non-public schools as well as education-related entities.
• Any guidance released to help States and Governors determine how to incorporate these factors in identifying which non-public schools receives services or assistance should include a tiered approach where poverty rate is prioritized as the primary factor for distribution of funding, with COVID infection rate a distant secondary factor.

In This Month’s School Administrator
“What matters most regarding student performance? Daily access to healthy food, reliable home broadband, an adult advocate built into the school design, and each student’s individual learning path to graduation are a few things emphasized in successful districts.” – Kristi Wilson, AASA President, from “Rethinking Student Assessment”

“It’s all about inspiration and having that humanistic ability to be able to meet your staff where they are and move them forward. You can’t just talk the talk, you’ve got to walk the walk … filled with nothing but your head and heart in alignment for the kids that you’re serving.” – Dr. Khalid Mumin, superintendent of the Reading SD, 2021 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year and one of four finalists for 2021 National Superintendent of the Year, in an interview with Juli Valentine of AASA

“A Reassessment of How We’re Measuring Students”

AASA Pandemic 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 for details or contact the PASA office.
The homework gap is/was perhaps one of education’s worst-kept secrets, a phenomenon during which nearly 12 million students were routinely unable to complete school assignments at home because of inadequate or non-existent access to broadband. The issue was blown wide open in the wake of the COVID pandemic: as schools shuttered and moved online, millions of students were unable to even access—let alone engage in—remote learning.

As the pandemic wore on and Congress negotiated a flurry of emergency supplemental bills, a bipartisan agreement on support for the homework gap quickly emerged but wasn’t able to get over the finish line until the sixth and most recent package, the American Relief Plan (ARP). We’ll use this month’s article to talk about that funding, and a related program in the December 2020 package (CARES II) that provides support to families, helping them afford internet in their homes.

The Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund is a $3.2 billion fund that will be administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC will use the fund to establish an Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program, that will help low-income families receive a discount off the cost of broadband service and certain connected devices. Details on the EBB started to roll out the first week of May, and eligible households will be able to enroll in the EBB to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service provided by an approved provider. USA Today has a good write up on who qualifies, and you can visit the Get Emergency Broadband website for more information on how to get the benefit.

The big win, though, was final inclusion of the funding dedicated to school and student access, the more than $7 billion in funding to address the homework gap within the ARP. The $7 billion will go to the FCC for the creation of the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF), which can be used to be for high-speed internet and devices used off campus. The funding will be distributed through the FCC’s E-Rate program, which has helped schools and libraries access affordable internet access for more than 20 years. Schools will be able to purchase wi-fi hotspots, modems and routers for students, and to fund the internet service those devices use.

The FCC has released its proposed rules on how the program will be structured, and, at this point, it is anticipated school districts will be able to start applying as early as late May, but more likely in June. Districts can expect to receive funds for approved applications slightly ahead of the start of the 2021-22 school year (in late August). In terms of what to expect in accessing the funds, the initial rule from the FCC includes many of the things AASA was supporting, including:

**APPLICATION:** distribute support from the ECF via an application-based program where school and library applicants submit eligible service and equipment requests to support connecting to the Internet for those students and patrons that lack any or sufficient Internet access in their homes or dwelling places, a device suitable for remote learning, or both;

**E-RATE MATRIX:** (if demand outpaces available funding) use the existing E-Rate discount matrix to rank funding requests, with applicants possessing the highest E-Rate discount rate receiving priority;

**INTERNET SPEED:** adopt program metrics and goals focused on progress towards ensuring that all students and educators are able to connect at internet speeds sufficient to engage in remote learning;

**ECF FUNDING:** allow schools, libraries, states, and consortia of schools and libraries eligible for support under the E-Rate program to be eligible to receive funding from the Emergency Connectivity Fund (does NOT expand eligibility to other non-profit entities that serve homeless, transitory and migrant students);

**ELIGIBLE SERVICES/EQUIPMENT:** allow the ECF to support only eligible services and equipment “that are needed to provide the connectivity required to enable and support remote learning for students, school staff, and library patrons” and devices suitable for remote learning and video conferencing platforms;

**REIMBURSEMENTS:** provide reimbursements for eligible equipment and services back to July 1, 2020; and

**BIDDING PROCESS:** waive the competitive bidding process rules but not establish an alternative streamlined competitive bidding process.

AASA is closely tracking the homework gap fund and application process and will continue to provide updates.
NOTEWORTHY QUOTES

“The budget gap that we’re experiencing can’t be attributed to extraordinary expenses caused by COVID. Rather, most of the increases we’re seeing are directly related to the other mandated costs… We’re seeing huge increases in our special education expenditures, our cyber charter costs, as well as the continuing increase in pension costs, which were projected to be plateaued by now about 10 years ago, they continue to increase.” – Dr. Mike Leichliter, superintendent of the Penn Manor SD, during a PA Schools Work Campaign press conference in his district on May 6

“We had one of the highest turnouts in voting in the last election. Yet, at the same time, we see some of the cracks in our system. We have a great deal of partisan, very heated debate going on. And that’s not necessarily a bad thing, but it can turn into an awful thing, into something that destroys the fabric of our community if we don’t learn how to talk to each other, how to discuss things with each other, and how to change things in a positive rather than a negative way.” – U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor during an April 14 online session with Justice Neil Gorsuch concerning the need for more civics education

“That money that these entities, organizations and individuals are putting into that EITC program or putting into that scholarship program, if that money went into this state’s General Fund and could be used for subsidy to school districts, it would meet the needs of many more kids and it would help distribute the funding more equitably.” – PASA Executive Director Dr. Mark DiRocco, commenting on legislation (HB 602) that would establish an EITC-like program to provide career technical schools with equipment

"I think it’s ridiculous in the United States of America that literally because of the ZIP code or the area you live that you will be provided an opportunity that somebody else isn’t. These kids deserve the same opportunities, if not more, because the very fabric of what this country has been built on has kept many of these kids in the circumstances they are without a chance to make it better. And what I mean by that is if we’re truly into equity and truly into making this country better, it starts with investing in the most important part – educating someone so they can grab the brass ring just like I could grab the brass ring. Why can’t my kids get that same opportunity?” – Daniel McGarry, superintendent of the Upper Darby SD, on the distribution formula for federal relief aid and funding in general, as quoted in US News, 4/19/21

“If there was ever a time to condemn the senseless acts of violence being perpetrated against people of color in our country, that time is now. If there was ever a time for all educational leaders to intensify a commitment to address the issue of equity to promote cultural responsiveness, inclusion and equitable outcomes on behalf of the young learners of this country, that time is now.” – Daniel Domenech, executive director of AASA, in response to the Derek Chauvin guilty verdict in the murder of George Floyd, from a press release

“We have provided flexibility to the start of sports seasons and the amount of practice time, we have changed the interruption to school practice schedules to assist schools to get back to competition, we have regionalized competition to assist in the mitigation of COVID-19, and we reduced qualifiers and tournaments to allow each school to get as much of the athletic experience for their students for as long as they could for as many as they could.” – Frank Majikes, president, PIAA, May 3 meeting Pennsylvania Athletic Oversight Committee

“We continue to make significant progress in the fight to stop the spread of COVID-19 and as more Pennsylvanians adults get vaccinated and guidance from the CDC evolves, we can continue to move forward with our reopening efforts.” – Department of Health Acting Secretary Alison Beam, from a May 4 press release announcing that mitigation orders except masking will be lifted on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31 at 12:01 a.m.

For Educational Leaders, By Educational Leaders

PASA MENTOR COACHING PROGRAM

Our superintendents and assistant superintendents continue to be challenged in ways we never imagined possible. The pandemic related complexities above and beyond the “normal” requirements for leading a school district are overwhelming, especially to those who are just beginning their roles as superintendents or assistant superintendents. The support of an experienced current or former Pennsylvania-based superintendent can be especially beneficial to the new career superintendent or assistant superintendent’s peace of mind, decision-making, and goal achievement.

PASA has developed and is piloting a mentor coaching program to assist with the unexpected and normal challenges of the job. Our program is based upon various international and national mentoring and coaching models. It provides a highly personalized approach, customized to the mentee’s needs and/or goals, in which an experienced, skilled mentor coach serves as the mentee’s thought partner.

Most successful executives, athletes, musicians, etc. utilize an experienced and skilled mentor and/or coach for ongoing guidance and training. You, too, deserve this opportunity.

For more information about PASA’s program, visit our website at https://www.pasa-net.org/mentor or contact Connie Kindler at ckindler@pasa-net.org.
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 website, 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.)

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 9.

PASA WEBSITE: CAREER CENTER
Have an administrative position you need to fill? Or are you considering moving forward in your professional career?

PASA WEBSITE:
CAREER CENTER

All programs and meetings are virtual.
See the PASA web site at www.pasa-net.org.

MAY
24 Legislative Committee Zoom Meeting
31 PASA office closed

JUNE
7 Legislative Committee Zoom meeting
14 Legislative Committee Zoom meeting
16 Leading in a Culture of Change Session 1 (virtual)
21 Legislative Committee Zoom meeting
23-24 National Superintendent Certification Program
28 Legislative Committee Zoom meeting

JULY
5 PASA office closed
15 PASA Executive Committee meeting
21 Leading in a Culture of Change Session 2 (virtual)
27 Virtual Program: Intro to the Superintendency – The First 100 Days

AUGUST
1-3 PA Education Leadership Summit (Poconos Kalahari)
4 Professional Development Committee meeting (virtual)
18 Leading in a Culture of Change Session 2 (virtual)

SEPTEMBER
6 PASA office closed
9-10 Board of Governors’ meetings
23-24 New Superintendents’ Academy Part 1
27-29 PASA/PSBA School Leadership Conference (Poconos Kalahari)