

THE PASA Flyer

Vol. 66, NO. 4- January 2024

Proud Leadership for
Pennsylvania Schools

Inside:

**Hope is Not a Strategy
for Effective Professional
Development**

Innovative Teaching and Learning:
Fostering Flexible Futures

Women's Caucus:
Creating Systems That Unlock Potential

From the President's Pen:
Focus on Visibility and Communication

From PASA's Executive Director:
Navigating 2024: Takeaways from the Basic
Education Funding Commission Report and
a Spotlight on Student Mental Health

Professional Development Calendar | Member News | State and National News | AASA Updates



Inside this issue:

- 4** Executive Director's Message:
Navigating 2024: Takeaways from the
Basic Education Funding Commission
Report and a Spotlight on Student
Mental Health
- 5** Region News
- 6** From the President's Pen: Focus on
Visibility and Communication
- 8** Hope is Not a Strategy for Effective
Professional Development
- 10** Creating Systems That Unlock
Potential
- 12** State News
- 13** National News
- 14** Innovative Teaching and Learning:
Fostering Flexible Futures
- 16** PLUS Caucus: It is Not About Politics:
It is About Each Child in Each District
- 18** Writing Out Loud: Stay Focused on
Team Chemistry to Achieve Your Goals
- 20** The Advocate: What You Can Expect
This Year



New Superintendent Induction Program

For educational leaders, by educational leaders

Looking for a mentor?

PASA's New Superintendent Induction Program will provide needed support and guidance for beginning superintendents to help them succeed with the transition into the superintendency. This program **facilitates a working relationship between the superintendent and an experienced mentor** that allows for open and private discussions and provides resources to sustain school system leaders.

This new program will include the following parameters:

- A Mentor will be matched with the leader for twelve consecutive months for the Comprehensive Program or as otherwise determined by the selected Program option.
- Regular contact mentor/superintendent meetings as needed to:
 - Review current progress and identify next steps throughout the year to accomplish the superintendent's desired results.
 - Assist with effective practices for communications with School Boards (e.g., agendas and information for school board meetings).
 - Assist with effective practices for working with the District's Administrative Team.
 - Assist with effective practices for communications to staff, parents, and the community.
 - Address current issues and concerns within District.
 - Review and help prioritize typical monthly tasks for Superintendents to accomplish, including budget development.
- Mentor will attend at least one board meeting (more if requested) to gain perspective of board and community climate (if part of the developed program).
- Mentor will attend at least one administrative team meeting (more if requested) to observe and advise as needed (if part of the developed program).
- Mentor will be available and on call for the leader to discuss any items or issues

Note: The program will be adapted to meet the individualized needs of the superintendent.

The program is open to PASA members who are current or acting superintendents. The superintendent applies to participate via the PASA New Superintendent Induction Program Application that requests information about the superintendent, the superintendent's district, and the superintendent's desired result(s).

For more information and pricing, [visit PASA's website.](#)

The PASA Flyer is published monthly

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Please report your appointments, renewals, awards or special achievements, or that of others in your region to Adam Kulikowski 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.

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PASA Leadership Forum

March 13-15, 2024

Hershey Lodge

Unleashing Potential: Navigating the Continuum of Creativity & Innovation in Schools

Are you registered for the PASA Leadership Forum, Unleashing Potential: Navigating the Continuum of Creativity and Innovation where the future of education in Pennsylvania takes center stage?

Don't miss out! Come join us on March 13-15 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center!

In addition to the legislative panel, quality keynote speakers, and curated breakout sessions from school leaders across the commonwealth during the first two days of the forum, please join us on Friday, March 15 for a unique opportunity to discuss, share, and plan for the latest developments in education, specifically focusing on the newly legislated flexibility in the school calendar and seat time.

For Friday's events, Dr. Sherri Smith and Dr. Michele Balliet, along with invited PASA members, will facilitate a working session designed specifically to provide participants with in-depth insights and practical tools to adapt to these changes effectively.

Moreover, be part of a visionary discussion on Education 2.0 in PA, where we will explore innovative strategies and ideas shaping the future of learning. Don't miss this chance to connect with fellow educational leaders, gain valuable knowledge, and lead your schools toward a dynamic and progressive future. Register now and be at the forefront of educational excellence and innovation in Pennsylvania!

Featured Speakers:



Kent Julian

Dream to Do

Most leaders have big goals for their teams and organizations. But often, instead of achieving those dreams, they get stuck in dreamland. Each year the same goals get set, and each year the same goals go unmet. Yet, when leadership cultivates the right environment, any team can move from DREAM to DO. That's because the environment you create determines the results you produce.



Gregg Behr

When You Wonder, You're Learning

Playful and practical, *When You Wonder, You're Learning* explores the science behind Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, revealing what Fred Rogers called the "tools for learning": essential skills and mindsets that boost everything from academic performance to children's well-being. These tools, which cost next to nothing to develop, hinge on the very things that make life worthwhile: self-acceptance; close, loving relationships; and a deep regard for one's neighbor.

Conference Investment:

PASA Members:

Early Bird| Standard
(All Days) Full Event: \$399|\$449
(Day 1) W/Th: \$300|\$320
(Day 2) Th/F: \$300|\$320

Members may bring guests from their own district/organization at a discounted rate!

Guests of members:

Early Bird| Standard
(All Days) Full Event: \$379|\$429

Non-PASA Member:

Early Bird| Standard
(All Days) Full Event: \$499|\$549
(Day 1) W/Th: \$400|\$420
(Day 2) Th/F: \$400|\$420

Plus: Join us Wednesday evening for our legislative panel discussion and the next two days for cutting-edge learning sessions on the latest education innovations and learning strategies happening in Pennsylvania.

[Click here](#) to register and book your hotel reservation!

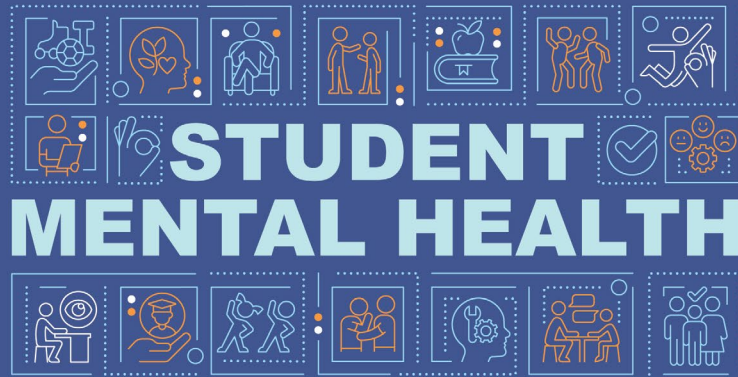
From the Executive Director

Navigating 2024: Takeaways from the Basic Education Funding Commission Report and a Spotlight on Student Mental Health



By Dr. Sherri Smith

Executive Director, PASA



Happy New Year! This year has the potential to be a momentous year for public education in Pennsylvania. One of the most impactful decisions coming this year is the state's response to the Commonwealth Court Case centered on securing equitable funding and equitable educational opportunities for all students.

On January 11, the Basic Education Funding Commission adopted a report by an 8-7 vote that addresses the adequacy gaps identified by the William Penn School District, et.al. versus the Pennsylvania Department of Education et. al. Commonwealth Court decision. The adopted report suggests an adequacy gap between rich and poor school districts of \$5.4 billion in K-12 funding. This shortfall is to be addressed over the next 7 years. The adopted report also provided other recommendations for consideration by the Governor, General Assembly and State Board of Education:

- Reduce the volatility in the Basic Education Funding (BEF) formula by using three-year averages in certain data elements, that eliminates the “cliffs” on concentrated poverty levels and resets the BEF base at the 2023-24 distribution level. Their recommendations also call for an increase of at least \$200 million through the new updated BEF formula each year.
- Reconvene the Basic Education Funding Commission again in 2029.
- Invest in school facilities.
- Examine charter school funding.

- Invest in the education workforce.
- Invest in support for students.
- Consider education issues beyond the scope of funding.

We appreciate the dedication of time and hard work that the BEF Commission put into this positive outcome for our schools. We know there are many more difficult conversations and decisions to be made by Governor Josh Shapiro and the General Assembly in this year's legislative session, however we are pleased with the initial commitment and decisions by the Commission.

As the next step, we are preparing for a new legislative session in Harrisburg. The focus at the Capitol is quickly pivoting to the 2024-25 Budget with Gov. Shapiro scheduled to present his budget address on February 6. This is the Governor's second budget address in which he has stated that he will be addressing the budget shortfalls indicated by the Commonwealth Court findings.

Another important topic, student mental health, is also under discovery and discussion at the Capital. PASA provided testimony to the House Education Committee this week on the current state of student mental health needs and the services provided by our schools. Our testimony was built around the responses PASA received from our Legislative Committee members from across the state. Below are some highlights from our testimony.

Mental health issues are continuing to affect all our schools- rural, urban, and suburban. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2021, “one in five children and adolescents experience a mental health

problem during their school years. Serious mental health problems, such as self-injurious behaviors and suicide, are on the rise, particularly among youth. Unfortunately, many children and youth do not receive the help they need, and disparities in access to care exist among low-income communities and minoritized youth. Among the 3.8 million adolescents ages 12–17 who reported a major depressive episode in the past year, nearly 60% did not receive any treatment, according to a 2019 report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Of the adolescents who do get help, nearly two-thirds do so only in school.”

As school leaders we are all aware of the difficulty and the need to address the mental health concerns of our students. In many cases, mental health concerns are commingled with other difficult society basic care issues such as hunger, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and neglect. Untreated mental health often leads to depression and anger, school truancy, physical aggression, drug and alcohol abuse, and thoughts of self-harm. To add to the complexity of this issue, there are many students and their parents who are in denial of their own mental health concerns and refuse any form of support or treatment. All these issues compound into a very difficult issue to overcome – one however, that we need to resolve as untreated mental health concerns of our students only lead to increased emotional, mental, and physical health concerns for themselves, their families, and the broader community.

The following are recommendations PASA presented to the House Education Committee as to the necessary resources and supports schools need to be successful in assisting our students’ mental health wellness:

- Increased and sustainable funding for both schools and county services as both are needed to provide comprehensive wraparound services to students and families.
- Assistance in addressing the mental health professionals shortage. Salary and benefits need to be reviewed as these are difficult jobs and we need to incentivize and retain our current professionals. The lack of individuals certified also creates a competitive environment between counties and schools for the same individuals.
- Assistance in addressing the shortage of qualified mental health providers and agencies in all regions of the state. Many parts of our state lack available outside-of-school resources to support students and families.
- Coordination of services between out-of-school and in-school support and programs in all regions of the state focused on the same outcomes. There needs to be an analysis of the availability of intensive services and inpatient services, as there are long wait times

Region News:

Region 1:

Central Greene Superintendent Dr. Kevin Monaghan retired on January 1. Monaghan served as superintendent for Central Greene since October 2020. Matthew Blair was named acting superintendent while the district conducts a search for a permanent successor.

Region 8:

Hollidaysburg Area School District named Curt Whitesel its new superintendent on January 10. Whitesel previously served as the lead administrator at Bald Eagle Area School District. Whitesel will remain at Bald Eagle until April.

Region 22:

Retired West Chester Superintendent Jim Scanlon was named interim superintendent of Central Bucks following the resignation of Abram Lucabaugh. The Central Bucks school board approved a six-month term on January 11.

Region 28:

Tiffany Nix resigned her position as Leechburg Area School District’s Superintendent on December 20 after serving seven years in the role. Nix will become the assistant superintendent at Penn-Trafford School District.

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 website at www.pasa-net.org (Click on the “Leadership Development” button and look for “Career Center.”)

for students in need of intensive services. These lags in needed supports can create an unsafe environment and undue stress on the student, family, and school to try and “maintain” a student in crisis.

Schools cannot manage the current level of mental health concerns alone. It takes a community effort in partnership with the schools to develop a comprehensive continuum of services for our students, as most times, providing services directly to students without the collaborative efforts of the family, yields fewer effective outcomes.

The year is off to a great start with critical conversations happening in the Capital to address important topics in public education in our Commonwealth! Stay involved in the conversations and be a part of our statewide advocacy efforts. Be well and thanks for all you do every day for our students, staff, families, and community! You are appreciated!

From the President's Pen

Focus on Visibility and Communication



By Dr. George F. Fiore
2023-24 PASA President



As we embark on the second half of the 2023-24 school year, I am optimistic and excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for our schools across the Commonwealth. The second half of the school year can undoubtedly be challenging, but it is precisely during these times that our leadership, strategy, and visibility play pivotal roles in guiding our staff and students toward success.

Two key strategies I plan to continue to implement and encourage each of us to focus on, are visibility and communication.

This time of year often presents unique challenges, and being present and visible for our staff and students is more crucial than ever. I was lucky early in my career to have a superintendent mentoring me and providing advice. He recommended that when the calendar turned to the second semester it was critical to be in classrooms, attending events, and building relationships.

He called it “leading with your feet.” By actively engaging with our school communities, we not only foster a sense of unity but also demonstrate our commitment to their success.

Whether it’s attending a wrestling match, conducting regular check-ins, or participating in classroom activities, let us make a concerted effort to be present and visible leaders. It is a great opportunity to get to know our students and show support for our staff members.

Communication is the cornerstone of effective leadership, and as chief school officers, it is imperative that we assess how we communicate our goals, highlight achievements, and articulate our strategies.

Transparent and open communication not only keeps our stakeholders well-informed but also builds trust and collaboration. Providing information regarding organizational goals, aspirations for the rest of the school year, or highlighting the great work of students and staff provides hope and pride in our communities.



Additionally, by leveraging the power of positive communication we can inspire and motivate our teams. Recognizing and celebrating achievements – both big and small – creates a culture of success and encourages continued dedication to our shared goals.

Take the time to acknowledge the hard work of your staff and students by communicating the positive impact they are making within the school and the broader community.

As we face the challenges and opportunities that the second half of the school year brings, we can unite in our commitment to visibility and effective communication. By doing so, we will not only navigate these challenges successfully but also create an environment where everyone in our educational community can thrive.

I am confident that, together, we will continue to shape the future of education in Pennsylvania and provide our students with the tools they need to excel.

Happy New Year and I hope your feet lead you to growth, resilience, and great success.



Aspiring to Leadership

Featuring 2024 Superintendent of the Year: Dr. Shane Hotchkiss

February 2 | Virtual Workshop



For more information, visit www.pasa-net.org.

Professional Development

Hope is Not a Strategy for Effective Professional Development



By Dr. Jacquelyn M. Martin
Superintendent, Keystone Central



It's early in 2024 which means it's time to plan for professional development needs and professional learning sessions for the summer and 2024-2025 school year.

While some superintendents and curriculum directors may dread this task, I have found it intrinsically rewarding to watch my team members grow in their professional skills. Developing professional staff members (including administrators) should be considered an investment in the people you lead and ultimately an investment in your students.

Effective professional development is defined as structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvement in student learning outcomes (Hammon, Hyler, and Gardner 2017). I believe that effective professional development does not happen by chance, but rather through thoughtful planning and collaboration.

Too many times administrators don't apply what they know to what they do because of time constraints and limited planning with colleagues. If you're interested in avoiding this "know-do gap" and you want to get results, consider these tips, tricks, and ideas to help you plan for effective professional development.

First, take inventory of your current practices with your

To view upcoming professional learning opportunities, visit [PASA's website](#) or check out our calendar of events on Page 23.

instructional leadership team.
Ask reflective questions such as:

- What successes did you have?
- What obstacles did you encounter?
- What can you improve moving into next year?
- What's wrong with our professional development?

I'm sure everyone can think of a time when they were sitting in a professional learning session that was not beneficial. You were likely questioning why you had to be there and became frustrated because your time was too valuable to waste in this venue. Chances are that the session in question featured "this year's new best thing" and included fads and buzzwords in the biz!

Maybe the "sit and get" method was applied to a "once and done" topic never to be heard of again. Or maybe the "one-hit wonder" was fun but not connected to any pertinent goals in your work. In my opinion, the biggest waste of time and money is what I refer to as "Pidgeon PD".

This is when you spend big money to bring in an outside expert on a single topic who flies in, drops a load, and flies

off! Here are some things you should avoid when planning for professional learning sessions.

- Lecture style
- Time-filling content or tasks
- Spending too long on one task or topic
- Questionable/ unclear takeaways
- Rapid delivery without enough time to process information
- Time of day and day of delivery (right before a holiday)
- Lack of purpose/Unclear purpose
- Lack of engagement, relevance, or connection to needs
- Slides not shared, or documents that do not match the presentation Once and done with no circle back or continued PD
- Too large of a group - hard to ask questions or get active involvement
- Lack of differentiation for the participants

Next, when planning for your professional learning consider the principles of andragogy, or adult learning, that was introduced by American Educator Malcolm Shepherd Knowles.

In short, he says that for adult learning to be effective, you must consider the characteristics of adult learners which include: The Need to Know, Self-Concept, Experience, Readiness to Learn, Orientation to Learn, and Motivation to Learn.

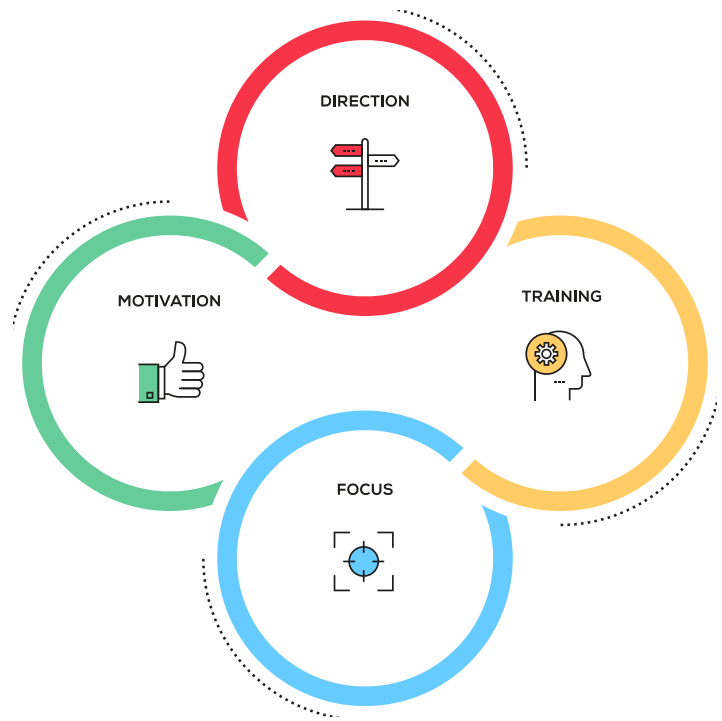
These characteristics are not really any different from what our 21st-century students need. Some additional characteristics to consider include that older learners have high expectations for presenters yet tend to be less open-minded as they may have become set in their ways.

This rigidity makes them somewhat resistant to change. It is true that with increased age, learning takes longer and among participants in any learning session there could be an age range of three decades. Unlike most school-age students, adult learners are trying to balance multiple responsibilities such as their families, work, and personal health and wellness.

Linda Darling Hammond emphasizes that quality professional development needs to consist of 40-80 hours of professional learning, extended over a 6-12 month period (Hammond 2017).

Finally, link your professional development plan to the vision and mission of the school district. Collect and analyze student achievement data to determine student outcomes. Determine priorities based on student outcomes.

Decide on the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that staff members need to accomplish in order to meet the student outcomes and work collaboratively to develop a plan for professional learning.



Here are several suggestions that my colleagues and I have found helpful in our planning for professional learning sessions:

- Be respectful - They are professionals
- Provide Relevance - What, So What, Now What
- Encourage risk and let them learn from their mistakes
- Create useful and relevant experiences
- Focus on practical knowledge and skills
- Provide options - choice
- Provide resources and facilitate exploration
- Accommodate group interactions, collaborations, and group problem solving
- Chunk information to allow for processing, comprehension, retention, and to build confidence
- Build suspense for novelty, interest, and motivation
- Individualize the learning - multiple paths
- Stimulate the mind through thought-provoking questions
- Tap into the emotional dimension of the audience - hook and engage
- Ask for feedback and share your plans to use it
- Offer feedback and build in time for reflection
- Provide coaching and expert support
- Provide adequate time to learn, implement, reflect... and then facilitate changes

I hope that these tips, tricks, and ideas will benefit your staff and students, too.

Luck seems to follow those who plan... which is why I always say that HOPE IS NOT A STRATEGY.

I am confident that if you use your transformational leadership skills and intentionally plan for respectful professional learning, you will reap intrinsic and extrinsic rewards on your journey.

Creating Systems That Unlock Potential



By Dr. Jodi Frankelli
Superintendent, Palmerton Area



Like many of you, the recent winter break afforded me some much-needed time to rest, relax, recharge, and read a good book. During this break, I read a book called *Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things* by Adam Grant. As I started reading this book, not only did it get me thinking about the work going on in my current school district but also about my own professional journey and career.

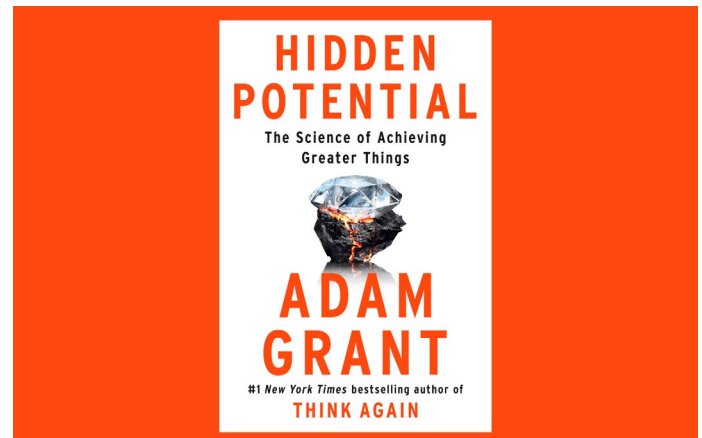
Most of the time I cannot believe that I have been in the education profession for almost 28 years.

As I inch closer and closer to retirement, sometimes I find myself reflecting on the start of my career and the steps that led me to where I am now.

One of the main things that I've realized is that someone at the start of my career believed in me. Not only did he believe in me, but he helped me and mentored me. He saw something in me and worked with me to bring out my hidden potential.

If you think about your own professional journey, I'm sure many of you could tell similar stories. These themes of hidden potential are probably shared among many of us.

As educational leaders, it is crucial for us to build what Adam Grant refers to in *Hidden Potential* as "systems of opportunity". Many of us already do this, right? We work hard to structure our school districts so that our employees and students have opportunities to achieve greatness. But, are we doing enough? What else can we do? Grant offers the following items for consideration as we look to grow and develop potential within our school districts:



Mine for Gold

Employees and students with prosocial skills (e.g. helping, sharing, cooperating, etc.) are often those who have the most potential to become successful even if they aren't the loudest most vocal person in the room. Yes, competence obviously matters, but often what sets potential leaders apart from others is their innate ability to use their prosocial skills.

In what ways are we and can we find these hidden bars of gold in our organization, and how can we build upon their skills?

Let Flowers Bloom

Finding ways to highlight and showcase the work of prosocial students and employees in our schools would pay dividends. As leaders, it is important that we allow people



PASA Women's Caucus Annual Conference

EmpowerHer: Supporting Excellence in Educational Leadership

MAY 19-21 | Hershey Hotel

**For more information,
visit www.pasa-net.org.**



the opportunity to pitch their ideas and have a voice. Often, these small opportunities allow people who may not naturally speak to have a safe space to learn and grow.

Are we truly providing opportunities for our students and employees to bloom within our organizations?
If not, what steps can we take to expand opportunities?

Diamonds in the Rough

Systems are often designed to find excellence that already exists, but what about our students and employees who may be on their way to excellence? Yes, sometimes people have clear paths to leadership, but often there are roadblocks and detours that take people off a direct path.

This is the hidden potential that we need to unleash not overlook. These are the uncut gems that are in our organizations right now waiting to be unearthed.

How can we look beneath the surface, wipe away the dirt, and find the diamonds in the rough? Are we doing enough to look for and develop these hidden skills?

As you work on system structures within your school district, I'm sure you will continue to look for ways to unlock the hidden potential among your students and staff. Continue to mine for gold, let flowers bloom, and seek to unearth the diamonds in the rough that you all have hidden in your organizations.

By doing so, you will continue to achieve wonderful things and build greatness within your school district.

Thank you to Our Silver Sponsors!



State News:



Pennsylvania Needs to Spend \$5.4B to Close Gap Between Rich and Poor Schools, Report Advanced by Dems Says

Pennsylvania will need to spend at least \$5.4 billion to close the gap between rich and poor school districts, according to a long-awaited report approved by a divided panel of policymakers Thursday.

The report was backed by Gov. Josh Shapiro's administration and won near-unanimous support from legislative Democrats who served on the Basic Education Funding Commission. It recommended changing the formula Pennsylvania uses to fund public schools to reduce year-over-year fluctuations in poorer districts' state funding, while also calling for increased investments in school construction and an expansion of the education workforce. It passed the commission 8-7.

Read the rest of the story: [“Pennsylvania Needs to Spend \\$5.4B to Close Gap Between Rich and Poor Schools, Report Advanced by Dems Says”](#) (from Spotlight PA, 1/11/24)

Auditor General Applauds Passage of Financial Literacy Education Requirement for PA Students

Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor applauded the passage of the first-ever financial literacy education requirement for Pennsylvania high school students. Act 35 of 2023 requires all public schools to teach a half a credit of personal financial literacy for high school students starting with the 2026-2027 school year.

Read the rest of the story: [“Auditor General Applauds Passage of Financial Literacy Education Requirement](#)

[for PA Students”](#) (from PennWatch, 1/2/24)

PA Tackles Teacher Shortage by Offering Up to \$15K Stipends to Student Teachers

College professor Melissa Marks only has to recall a recent conversation she had with a student to know what Pennsylvania's new student teacher stipend program will mean to future educators. The aspiring teacher, who left college due to finances, had re-enrolled and was trying to figure out how he could afford tuition while working an unpaid 12-week student teaching requirement. Marks said he broke into tears when she told him that a state-funded stipend could be available to help him with his expenses.

Read the rest of the story: [“PA Tackles Teacher Shortage by Offering Up to \\$15K Stipends to Student Teachers”](#) (from Pennlive, 1/3/24)

PA's Poorest School Districts Were Slated for a Funding Boost. State Aid Went to School Construction Instead

Pennsylvania's poorest districts won't receive \$100 million in new money to help fill vacancies and reduce funding deficits after lawmakers diverted those dollars to school construction projects. Roughly half of the 100 “Level Up” schools serve students in rural counties where populations are shrinking, and taxpayers bear the brunt of rising costs.

After initially agreeing to send hundreds of millions in additional funding to the state's 100 poorest school districts, state lawmakers decided to reroute that money to fund school construction projects as a compromise when Democrats and Republicans were finalizing the remaining parts of the budget in December.

Read the rest of the story: [“PA's Poorest School Districts Were Slated for a Funding Boost. State Aid Went to School Construction Instead”](#) (from Spotlight PA, 1/10/24)

Pittsburgh Public School Directors Call for Transparency in Upcoming Budget Talks

Pittsburgh Public School directors are calling for more transparency during upcoming work sessions for the 2025 budget. Feedback from several board members, many of whom touched on the need for additional public input during the budget process, was given to district administration during Monday's business and finance meeting. It came weeks after the board passed a \$719.4 million spending plan for 2024 that included a \$29.9 million deficit and that was criticized by several residents who said it lacked sufficient community input.

Read the rest of the story: [“Pittsburgh Public School Directors Call for Transparency in Upcoming Budget Talks”](#) (from Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1/9/24)

National News:



Racial and Gender Disparities in the Superintendent's Office, in Charts

There's a growing body of research detailing the deep gender and demographic disparities that persist in school districts' top positions. Not only have men long made up a disproportionate share of school superintendents—especially when considering that the vast majority of teachers are women.

They're also more likely to make higher salaries as district leaders and be appointed superintendent earlier in their careers. A new study—which analyzed data about superintendents in Texas between 2010 and 2021—documented a longer professional trajectory for women and people of color before they end up in districts' top jobs, and pay disparities for equally experienced superintendents. The study builds on previous research that has found much of the same across the country.

Read the rest of the story: ["Racial and Gender Disparities in the Superintendent's Office, in Charts"](#) (from Education Week, 12/21/23)

Bill Would Fund AI Training Through Schools, Nonprofits

A bill introduced in Congress — the Artificial Intelligence Literacy Act — aims to build AI skills and workforce preparedness as the emerging technology continues to change workplace dynamics. The legislation, introduced Dec. 15, 2023, has drawn bipartisan support and endorsements from major universities, education associations and workforce partners, including the Society for Human Resource Management.

Read the rest of the story: ["Bill Would Fund AI Training Through Schools, Nonprofits"](#) (from K-12 Dive, 1/5/24)

5 K-12 Ed Tech Trends to Follow in 2024

K-12 education is on the precipice of change in 2024. School IT administrators need to be ready to adapt as numerous shifts at the federal level create impacts throughout the education landscape. Affecting many schools' budgets this year, the final round of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funding expires in September.

Many K-12 institutions relied on this funding to sustain new educational technology programs, including providing devices to teachers and students. Additionally, the Office of Educational Technology is poised to release its updated National Educational Technology Plan in early 2024. The revisions to the NETP will take into consideration the vast changes to the K-12 technology landscape as a result of the pandemic and the subsequent accelerated digital transformation. The K-12 tech trends of 2024 are an amalgamation of ongoing changes that will be brought into even sharper focus by the major factors poised to alter educational technology. Here are five things K-12 IT leaders should look out for:

Read the rest of the story: ["5 K-12 Ed Tech Trends to Follow in 2024"](#) (from Ed Tech, 12/20/23)

Duties Deferred: The Price Students Pay When Schools Pass the Buck on Title IX

Case records document a pattern of schools deferring to law enforcement and other outside agencies — and failing to protect students in sexual assault and harassment cases in the process.

Read the rest of the story: ["Duties Deferred: The Price Students Pay When Schools Pass the Buck on Title IX"](#) (from K-12 Dive, 12/13/23)

Innovative Teaching and Learning

Fostering Flexible Futures



By Dr. Scott Hand

Dir. of Tech. Innovation & Instructional Design
Radnor Township



A post-pandemic pedagogy calls upon us to reimagine time, pace, and place. Rigid structures of the past can be modernized to reflect the world for which we are preparing our students and better address their unique needs.

The movements are happening around us, both compelling us to act and creating systems to do so. The confluence of precedent, policy, and pathway exists, eroding traditional barriers and providing practical means toward contemporary learning designs.

Contemporary flexibilities have permeated our culture in various ways.

We see this in a workforce that desires remote work (and companies that provide it), the prevalence of online learning systems and online testing (PSSAs, SATs, industry certifications), anytime and free learning in informal YouTube/Instagram/TikTok tutorial videos and formal online courses (MOOCs), and now artificial intelligence to help personalize learning.

Additionally, the more recent legislative and systemic affordances we see in our systems include Flexible Instructional Days (FID) and Act 56 of 2023, which passed both chambers unanimously, now allowing districts to choose between 180 days OR 900/990 hours for their school year.

Now is the time to ask: In what ways can we provide more flexible learning opportunities that echo culture, personalize learning for our students, and leverage the new systems that allow it?

Time

With the new provisions for PA school days and hours, the flexibility now exists to reconsider how time is spent in school during a school year. According to a 2021 research report, nearly 1,600 school districts in 24 states have adopted a four-day weekly academic schedule (Thomson, Gunter, Schuna, & Tomayko, 2021).

This model is not new. U.S. schools have experimented with a four-day week as far back as the 1930s. Districts experimented with this in the 1970s during the energy crisis when districts looked to save on bussing and utilities.

More recently, at least one district in south central PA had recently investigated the idea of a four-day week. Would this be possible for your district? How could a four-day week positively impact our budgets or recruitment and retention?

Given our new school code affordance, we are also able to look at our school calendars through a new lens.

Perhaps we might not all go full-steam toward a four-day week, but now that we are not as focused on counting days

(if using the 'hours' option), we can perhaps begin to look at some shorter weeks more closely with days for restoration, shorter weeks when there might be long stretches between breaks, during windows involving standardized testing, or opening opportunities for community projects or internship. But as we are flexing our calendar time, so, too, should students be able to flex time.

Learner Pace

As we look at calendar time differently, we should also consider how those days and hours are spent within the school. Competency-based education (CBE) is a model that promotes this kind of student flexibility in pace.

In CBE, we focus on the student's demonstration of desired learning outcomes, allowing learners to progress at their own pace. It is a framework for teaching and assessment of learning based on predetermined "competencies," which emphasizes outcomes and real-world performance.

Mastery is a journey, and not all students achieve it at the same time or at the same pace. Building21 (building21.org), with lab schools in Philadelphia and Allentown, is a stellar example of CBE in action. Their wealth of online resources will help launch great conversations about CBE within your districts.

Pace + Place

In 1961, J. Lloyd Trump published, "Focused on Change: A Guide to Better Schools," based on 4.5 years of research and case studies from NASSP. Through this field research and publication(s) came the Flexible Modular, or "Flex Mod," scheduling concept.

His ideas mirrored that of universities - with flexibility, time, and connection. Large group mods (modules) consisted of all students in a similar class section receiving the lecture at once, rather than 2-3 teachers delivering the same lecture multiple times over many periods in a day.

Small group and individual study mods for students were also embedded in student schedules. The Flex Mod schedule is typically broken down into smaller time units, typically 20 minutes, and classes meet during different mods at different times across different days.

For examples of flexible modular scheduling in action, see Westside High School in Omaha, NE (<https://www.westside66.org/Domain/8>) and River Bluff High School in Lexington, SC (<https://www.lexington1.net/RBHS>).

At a more granular, classroom level, the Flex Mod class format at Radnor High School (www.rtsd.org/FlexMod) introduces flexible pace and space according to the learning modules (mods) within a course, units of study, and student needs.

This Flex Mod variant brings together blended,



To learn more about the newly legislated flexibility in school calendars, reserve your space at PASA's Leadership Forum at the Hershey Lodge March 13-15. Learn more on Page 3.

personalized, and mastery-based learning formats. Learning modules (whole group, laboratory, small group, individual) determine the space where learning happens during the class period, whether in the classroom or in a flexible space within the school building.

When mastery is obtained or demonstrated, students time is opened for acceleration, enrichment, or shifted to focus on other content. Teacher-determined small group mods are flexible to break up the assigned class into targeted groups of students or smaller groups for more concentrated instruction according to student group needs or more simply reducing the student-to-teacher ratio in order to increase student-to-teacher interaction. It also allows for greater focus on learner needs providing windows of time for targeted enrichment and remediation.

Future Forecast

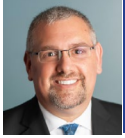
The complexities of time, pace, and place, while daunting, can have a significant positive impact on school cultures and communities, fostering learner agency, autonomy, and self-directed learning along with greater teacher satisfaction.

Through incremental shifts in our instructional models, we move into next-generation learning designed for Generation Alpha.

Let's leverage the new provisions, reimagine time, pace, and place, and be inspired by others to begin shifting our stagnant systems and boldly embrace the possibilities.

PLUS Caucus of PASA

It is Not About Politics. It is About Each Child in Each District



By Dr. Christopher Dormer
PLUS Caucus Chair



Today is Thursday, January 11, 2024. In a few hours, the Basic Education Funding Commission is scheduled to hold a hearing to release its report to respond to the Commonwealth Court ruling that Pennsylvania unconstitutionally funds its schools.

When you read this article, the hearing will have been held, hopefully a course of action has been shared, reactions from those who love it and those who hate it will fill the airwaves and social media feeds. Inevitably, political maneuvering will begin as we will be forced to await the Governor's budget address next month and how a divided legislature will ultimately negotiate a budget.

I am not going to hold back on my feelings about this. I serve the 28th most underfunded school district in Pennsylvania when you apply the Fair Funding Formula of 2016.

Because that formula has never been fully enacted, and Norristown does not have a strong local property tax base, we have been forced to make financial choices that have often not been in the best interest of children over the past decade or two.

While we celebrate the great things we have, are able to provide, and the honest successes of our students, staff, and families, there is always the pang in our hearts that we can and should be doing more.

You can imagine my sincere optimism when the Commonwealth Court ruled the system was broken and ordered something be done.

I am grateful that I was afforded an opportunity to testify and tell our story directly to the BEF Commission. I am appreciative that I was able to interact with the panel to see their genuine interest in doing something.

I remain hopeful that the final result will be somewhere near Dr. Mark Kelly's expert testimony that ADEQUACY requires an additional investment of over \$6 billion.

But now we wait. What can and should we be doing?

Personally, I was encouraged that the conversation around education funding has shifted from what is "fair" to what is "adequate". For as long as I have been in education, state budgets, and in fairness, our school district budgets, have attended to collective buckets that almost become abstract and definitely detach from the heart of the true



purpose those budgets are supposed to serve. We allocate for schools, departments, curricular materials, debt service payments, and more. When we talk about adequacy, which Norristown is still the 28th most underfunded in PA using Dr. Kelly's adequacy gap analysis, the focus shifts from those collective buckets to the dollars needed to serve each and every child. In Norristown, it would be an investment of an additional \$7,000 per child.

As this report comes out, keep the conversation on what any increased state funding will truly serve - CHILDREN. Not a political agenda, and not just some collective or abstract bucket. Each and every child. In each and every school district.

Increasing state funding will allow us as school leaders to implement the truest vision of why we do what we do. We educate each child to help them learn and grow to become the best versions of themselves, ready for life. Let's work to keep the focus where it needs to be with this potentially once in a lifetime opportunity - on children and the future of this Commonwealth.

Christopher Dormer is the proud Superintendent of Schools of the Norristown Area School District in Montgomery County. He is the President of the Pennsylvania League of Urban Schools (PLUS) Caucus of PASA, and also serves on the PASA Board of Governors and the PASA Professional Development Committee.

Connecting the Dots:

School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting



A joint PASA/PASBO budget and school finance workshop designed specifically to help school district leaders connect the dots of their budgets by understanding their past, present, and future funding impacts and practices.

Regional In-Person Workshops:

Wednesday, April 3

Berks County Intermediate Unit 14
1111 Commons Blvd, Reading, PA



Monday, April 15

Westmoreland Intermediate Unit 7
102 Equity Dr, Greensburg, PA 15601



Wednesday, April 17

Central Intermediate Unit 10
1633 Philipsburg-Bigler Hwy, Philipsburg, PA 16866

Session Description:

This **no-cost workshop** is designed to encourage joint attendance by Superintendents and their CFO/Business Manager or other critical leadership staff. Participants will spend a full day discussing how to look at their school district budget to drive more effective multi-fiscal year planning. The program will include diving into the details of the Basic Education Funding and Special Education Funding and examining school district expenditure growth over time. Participants will be provided with tools and resources to map out strategies for making more accurate and thoughtful short and long-term budget decisions.

Additional topics to be discussed include the ESSER era unwind, fund balances and reserves, infrastructure needs, expenditure mandates and educational choice, resource and staff planning, as well as overarching insights on the BEF Commission's recommendations, the school funding lawsuit, and the Governor's proposed 2024-25 budget.

Session Schedule:

Check-in for Workshop.....8:30 a.m.

Program.....9:00 a.m.

Program concludes.....3:30 p.m.

Includes continental breakfast and lunch.

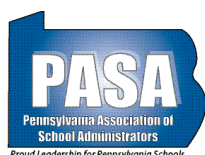
How to Register:

This **NO COST workshop** is limited to PASA and PASBO members. Registration is limited to two individuals per district (preferably Superintendent and CFO/Business manager).

Register now for one of the workshops. **Attendance is limited to the first 100 registrants for each location.**

[Berks County I.U. 14 on April 3](#) | [Westmoreland I.U. 7 on April 15](#) | [Central I.U. 10 on April 17](#)

Visit www.pasa-net.org or www.pasbo.org for more information on the Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting Workshop.

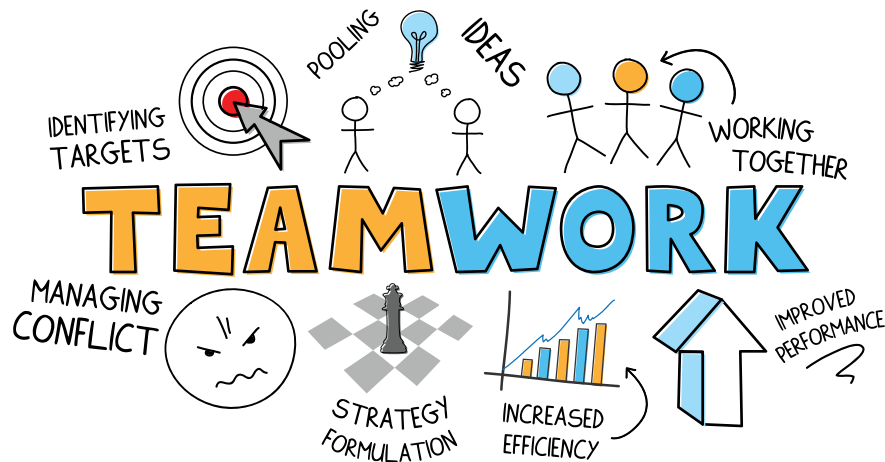


Writing Out Loud

Stay Focused on Team Chemistry to Achieve Your Goals



By Adam Kulikowski
Director of Communications



To many Philadelphia Eagles fans, the result Monday night against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers was far from surprising. For weeks, the Philly faithful braced themselves for this moment as their team fumbled away a 10-1 start, first place in the NFC, a division title, and any realistic hope of returning to the Super Bowl for a second straight season.

A combination of factors contributed to The Birds' demise, but one stood out on Monday night as Tampa Bay's Baker Mayfield carved up our secondary en route to a 32-9 victory.

The Manningcast during the game featured former Baltimore Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis—an expert on defense—who was quick to point out what fans of this team have seen for more than a month... that 'Everyone (on the Eagles) was playing individual football... no one plays together.'

And he was right.

You didn't need to be a psychologist to read the body language of the players and coaching staff.

In a matter of weeks, everything seemed to fall apart. Distrust of leadership grew. Finger-pointing was evident on the sidelines among the players. Individuals started playing for themselves.

A sense of disillusionment built like fog in San Francisco among the team and fans alike.

While there was plenty of individual talent on the roster, a lack of trust and teamwork greatly exacerbated weaknesses on the field.

As the final seconds ticked away on a season that began with so much hope, I thought, someday we will learn what happened behind those locker room doors. Everything, after all these days, becomes a book, or podcast, or a documentary.

But while we await all the juicy details that a tell-all can spill, there are lessons today we can glean.

The chemistry of a team—whether that is a sports team like the Eagles or a district staff—is an ever-evolving entity that requires consistent attention to stay in harmony and operate effectively.

The Eagles are a prime example of what happens when that harmony falls out of tune.

As leaders, you are the maestros that set the tone for how your team functions. Keeping a keen ear to this harmony is key to accomplishing the goals one has for their district and students. Here are some reminders to stay focused on as the second half of the school year gets under way:

Lead by example

Demonstrate a strong work ethic, empathy, and a commitment to the team's success. Leaders who actively participate and engage with their team contribute to a positive and cohesive atmosphere.

Encourage open and honest communication

Encourage your team members to share their ideas, provide constructive feedback, and respond to challenges openly.

Define Clear Goals and Roles

Clearly define each team member's role and responsibilities. Clarity in roles helps to prevent confusion and helps everyone contribute effectively to the team's success.

Address and Resolve Conflicts Promptly

Foster a culture where feedback is seen as an opportunity for growth. Team members should feel comfortable addressing issues directly rather than letting them grow into bigger future problems.

Encourage Collaboration and Inclusivity

Create an environment that values collaboration and inclusivity. Encourage team members to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and seek input from one another.

Promote Team Bonding Activities

Foster a sense of camaraderie by celebrating achievements, milestones, and special occasions together. This helps build positive relationships and a shared sense of accomplishment.

Recognize and Appreciate Contributions

Regularly acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of individual team members. Recognition can be both formal, such as during team meetings or through awards, and informal, such as expressing gratitude in day-to-day interactions. Recognizing achievements reinforces a positive team culture and motivates individuals to continue putting forth their best efforts.

By prioritizing communication, collaboration, and mutual respect, teams can continue to foster the strong chemistry needed for success. A lesson I hope resonates not only in districts across the Commonwealth but back home with my beloved Birds!

Sources:

UC Berkeley:

<https://hr.berkeley.edu/hr-network/central-guide-managing-hr/managing-hr/interaction/team-building/steps>

MIT:

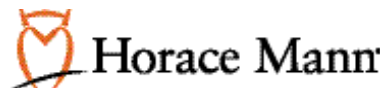
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The Advocate: What You Can Expect This Year



By Tara Thomas

Policy Analyst, AASA,
The School Superintendents Association



Happy New Year! As we head into 2024 and a major election year, this month's edition of The Advocate is a summary of everything that could impact K-12 leaders in the year ahead. While by no means an exhaustive list, this is our attempt to peer into our cloudy crystal ball and share what we expect to happen in year four of the Biden Administration and to ask what could happen in any increasingly polarizing, chaotic Congress.

What we anticipate from the Biden Administration in 2024:

Late Liquidation Template for American Rescue Plan funding, so districts that need additional time to liquidate funding for projects and services paid for by ARP funds have the ability to apply to the State to request additional time.

IDEA Medicaid Final Rule to be released by ED changing the requirements to obtain parental consent before billing for Medicaid reimbursable services for students with disabilities.

Title IX Final Rule is expected in March--this would touch on both sexual harassment/discrimination and as well as athletics.

Final EPA regulations requiring Community Water Systems to test for lead in elementary schools at least once every five years.

New FTC regulations on the Children Online Privacy Protection Act.

FCC implementation of the "Learn Without Limits" Initiative. Wifi on buses through e-rate will be allowed starting in the 2024 application window. A proposal to expand e-rate for hotspots for students is out and will likely be finalized this year.

Department of Labor's Final Rule on the Fair Labor Standards Act to increase the salary threshold for employees who are overtime exempt.

USDA Final Rule on Updates to Child Nutrition Standards expected in the first quarter of 2024.

Initial implementation of Summer EBT - The January 1 deadline for participation has passed and 33 states have opted-in. This is the first time the program will be implemented on a large scale. Schools will play a role in supporting enrollment in the program but USDA is working to place the majority of the responsibility on states.

Although Congress didn't make a lot of progress on appropriations, there was a considerable committee action before



Congress left for the holidays.

Will Congress decide funding levels for FY24? Will they decide before the February 2 deadline? Will we be operating under a yearlong Continuing Resolution resulting in an across-the-board 1% cut to all ED programs?

Will bipartisan student data privacy legislation such as the Kids Online Safety Act move forward in the Senate?

Will the bipartisan reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) move out of the House and will the Senate start from scratch or begin to work off the House legislation? On December 12, the House Education and the Workforce Committee moved their bipartisan proposal of WIOA, A Stronger Workforce for America Act (H.R. 6585). It is unclear how or if the Senate will move on this bill if the House is able to successfully pass it.

Will the House begin to work on a reauthorization of the Education Sciences Reform Act? The Senate HELP Committee passed its reauthorized version out of Committee, known as the Advancing Research in Education Act (S. 3392).

Will the Secure Rural Schools Program be reauthorized? On December 14, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources moved a bill forward that would extend the program through FY26, a critical first step.

How will the 2024 election impact Congressional priorities and the FY25 appropriations process?

We look forward to what will be another interesting year in Washington D.C. We will continue to keep you updated on any actions that will impact school districts here on The Leading Edge blog. Stay tuned for opportunities to engage with your members of Congress and various agencies on issues important to K-12 education.

In the January Issue of School Administrator Magazine:

This month's issue examines how health services are provided to students in public schools. Articles in the January issue include: Universal Depression Education in High Schools; Student Mental Health: From Support to Treatment; Leadership with a Diagnosis of Depression; District Support for Students Experiencing Homelessness and more.



Quotes:

“Leaders whose words and actions are reliably consistent lead with integrity and congruence. They are predictable when times are difficult--especially when they are difficult. When leaders are not congruent, organizations inevitably fail because people stop believing in them--they stop trusting them. Unequivocal trust is so critical to moving an organization's mission forward.”

–Dave Eberwein, Superintendent/CEO, School District 63, Saanichton, British Columbia
“Leadership, Character, and Congruence”

“Though positive qualities far outpace the negative, those strengths often are overlooked or overshadowed when problems arise... That's why in our short-attention-span, clickbait media landscape, schools must be persistently proactive with bite-size good news. The key is creating and disseminating succinct photographic and video content that resonates on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.”

–Matt Baron, Founder, Inside Edge PR & Media in
“Influencing Public Perception with Proactive Videos”

“As district leaders, we are not just educators in the traditional sense. We can directly impact our community's well-being. Our decisions, be they curricular or administrative, can impact public health in our local communities.”

–David Schuler, AASA Executive Director in “Public Health in Public Schools”



By Ann McMullan
Project Director, CoSN



Data Privacy Week – January 21-27, 2024

As we continue our journey into 2024, CoSN is placing a special emphasis on the critical need to assure that data privacy is a priority in all K-12 schools across the nation. Data Privacy Week, which runs from January 21 through January 27, 2024, provides an opportunity for school leaders to turn their attention to the issue of protecting students' personal information. CoSN is pleased to offer multiple resources including blogs, toolkits, workshops, courses, and a special webinar to support school districts' efforts regarding data privacy, not only during Data Privacy Week, but throughout the year.

You are invited to access these free resources on student data privacy at <https://www.cosn.org/student-data-privacy/>. Some specific examples of the resources found on the CoSN Student Data Privacy website include:

- Student Data Privacy Video Series: Why Privacy Matters
- Updated Data Privacy Toolkit, focused on Transparency & Trust
- Resource: Making the Case for Privacy

Trusted Learning Environment Seal

The CoSN Trusted Learning Environment (TLE) Seal program is a unique privacy framework designed to support school system leaders in building effective privacy policies and programs within a culture of trust and transparency.

The TLE website can be accessed at <https://www.cosn.org/trusted-learning-environment/> and provides school leaders with a wide variety of materials to support their leadership work regarding student data privacy including:

- Preview the CoSN TLE Seal Application
- Building a Trusted Learning Environment: Understanding the Leadership Practice
- Webinar Recording: Leadership Strategies to Assure Student Data Privacy

EmpowerED Superintendent edLeader Panel Series

CoSN, AASA, and edWeb.net co-host an online edLeader Panel broadcast series, sponsored by ClassLink, to help

superintendents connect and collaborate. Registration is free and participants can join the live event or view recordings and podcast versions starting a day or two after the live broadcast.

The upcoming February 12, 2024 (5:00 pm Eastern Time) edLeader Panel broadcast on the topic of Leading Learning That Truly Meets the Needs of Each Student. In this edLeader Panel Dr. Jill Louters, Superintendent, New Rockford-Sheyenne School District, ND, Mr. Randy Squier, Superintendent, Coxsackie-Athens Central School District, NY, and Dr. Jason Van Heukelum, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools, VA, share the strategies their districts implement to assure that the teachers and staff have the knowledge and skills to leverage what technology can provide to enable each student to be a successful learner.

Learn more about the upcoming broadcast and access the free registration link at: <https://home.edweb.net/webinar/supers20240212/>.

If you missed the January 8, 2024, edLeader Panel broadcast on of Proactive Leadership Regarding Cybersecurity in School Systems which featured Pennsylvania's own, Dr. Peter Aiken, Superintendent Central York School District, in conversation with Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent of Schools, Beaverton, Oregon, and Dr. Mark Benigni, Superintendent Meriden Public Schools, Connecticut, you are welcome to access the video recording and/or the podcast version at <https://home.edweb.net/webinar/supers20240108/>.

CoSN 2024 Annual Conference, "Leading for Innovation: At Warp Speed"

Registration is now open for the CoSN 2024 Annual Conference, scheduled for April 8-10, 2024, in Miami, Florida. For conference and hotel information and registration links, see <https://www.cosn.org/cosn2024/>.

CoSN Membership: If you, your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact membership@cosn.org.

PASA Calendar



January:

January 30: Managing the Risks: Record Retention, Right to Know, Board Conflict of Interest, and Litigation Holds

February:

February 2: Aspiring to Leadership Workshop (Virtual)

February 7: Managing the Risks: Complex Student Issues

February 15-17: AASA National Conference on Education

February 16: PASA State Reception at Rustic Root

February 28: Managing the Risks: The Pennsylvania Public Official and Employees Ethics Act--Compliance and Potential Unintended Violations

March:

March 13: PA League of Urban Schools (PLUS) Conference (Hershey Lodge)

March 13-15: 2023 PASA Leadership Forum: Unleashing Potential: Navigating the Continuum of Creativity and Innovation in Schools

April:

April 3: Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting (Berks I.U.)

April 15: Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting (Westmoreland I.U.)

April 17: Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting (Central I.U.)

May:

May 19-21: Women's Caucus Annual Spring Conference (Hershey Hotel)

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