



## EPHRATA AREA'S DR. BRIAN TROOP NAMED 2023 PA SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators is proud to announce the selection of Ephrata Area School District's Dr. Brian Troop as the 2023 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year.

Troop emerged from a tremendously strong field of nominees including fellow finalists Stephen Rodriguez of Pottstown and Dr. Randal Lutz of Baldwin-Whitehall to earn 55.5 percent of the vote among the Board of Governors. Finalists were selected by the PASA Elections Committee and voted on by the Board of Governors.

"This honor means so much to me, as it is a recognition of the work happening in our district on behalf of our students and community," Dr. Troop said. "Every leader knows you are only as good as your team, and I am impressed daily by the dedication and innovation I see from 'Team Ephrata!' Additionally, this honor is even more meaningful to me because it comes from fellow superintendents, who have overcome unimaginable obstacles and braved the most treacherous seas over these last few years."

His innovative thinking, collaborative leadership and drive to succeed have improved communication in the district, elevates student performance and led to the launch of several community-connected initiatives including the Life Ready Graduate and Cornerstone Projects.

Dr. Troop led Ephrata Area's implementation of the district's Life Ready Graduate (LRG) initiative in 2017 which created a collection of learning traits that are valuable in the real world.

The Cornerstone Projects are year-long projects for each grade level that connect students with a community partner to help build engagement and strengthen relationships between the school and community. The project helps to prioritize the Life Ready Graduate skills through problem-solving on real-world tasks with relevant community partners.

"Dr. Troop is an exemplary, forward-thinking leader and certainly has earned this great honor of PA's Superintendent of the

*See PA Superintendent of the Year, page 6*

## PASA RECOGNITION LUNCHEON AND ANNUAL MEETING

### SET FOR NOV. 10

The PASA Annual Meeting and Recognition Luncheon will be held on November 10 at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey from noon to 2:30 p.m. The meeting and recognition luncheon are open to all PASA members and will include a 'state of the association' report from PASA Executive Director Dr. Sherri Smith and the honoring of the following award winners:

**2023 Superintendent of the Year:** Dr. Brian Troop, Ephrata Area

**Instructional Leadership:** Mr. Shane Murray, Iroquois Area

**Service to Profession:** Dr. Noreen O'Neill, Chester County I.U.

**Leadership in Public Education:** Mr. Michael Vuckovich, Indiana Area

PASA members are invited to attend the recognition luncheon. Cost is \$35 per person. For more information, [click here](#).

Registration questions concerning the annual meeting or the recognition luncheon can be directed to Anna Maria Stankoczi at [amstankoczi@pasa-net.org](mailto:amstankoczi@pasa-net.org).



Troop

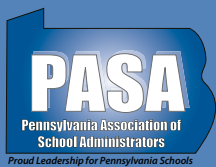
Murray

O'Neill

Vuckovich

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#### **PASA Members:**

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](mailto:pasa@pasa-net.org). Copy deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DR. SHERRI SMITH

### A NEW BEGINNING

A new beginning at every turn of the road! The start of a new school year with many routines more like a normal start to a year! A new start at PASA with a substantial changeover of our staff. And on the horizon – a new start with our State Leadership with changes coming in the Governor's Office, PA Department of Education, and in our membership of PA's General Assembly. We all know that change can be good but can also make people uneasy as we are not quite sure what the future holds. What does it all mean for all of us?

As I travel the Commonwealth for my first round of connecting with our members, there is a sense of relief in many ways as pandemic protocols have lessened. Students are back to collaborating and teaming in classroom lessons without social distancing and masks, having a steady in-person schedule each day, connecting and building positive relationships with their classmates, teachers, and other educators, and enjoying their many extracurricular events. Certainly, a step toward improving the routines and mental wellness of our students, and in effect, our staff members and parents. All steps in the right direction, however, we also know that there is still a lot of work ahead of us to smooth out the disruptions from the last few years. What most comes to mind is the concerns with staffing our schools, rebuilding a damaged educator pipeline, and finding the resources and practices to assist our students in overcoming any lapses in their learning.

As I take the lead at PASA, I appreciate the talent and enthusiasm of our newly built team. First, we bring the

"A" team of Anna, Adam, and Aubrey – all new in the past year bringing fresh ideas to their positions and responsibilities. Dr. Michele Balliet will be the last member to join the team as our new Director of Professional Development at the end of October, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge and experience. Of course, we feel secure with the stability of both members of our legal team, Virginia and Linda, as well as Deb for our finances, who each bring us a piece of mind in their care and support of our members! This year we will weigh the current practices in all facets of our work at PASA, while we embark on a review and update to PASA's current strategic plan. Our goal is to have a newly revised plan for the start of the 2023-24 school year that sets our direction to greater heights of advocacy, support, and professional development!

And finally – the changes in our state leadership. We all know how important it is to have the right people in the seats of our General Assembly, Governor's Office, and of course, the Department of Education.

At this point, other than the fact that we ALL need to get out and vote – we are in a "wait and see" for our next steps in building relationships with our new representatives and deciding our points of advocacy. One thing we know for sure is that no matter who sits in these seats, the next four years will be critical in the positioning and funding of public education, not only in PA but nationally.

What I do know is that we have incredible educational leaders in PA and if we unify, work together and lead the discussions on education, we can only be in a better place in the future! We just need to strap on a positive, forward-thinking collective mindset and join in our efforts in how we reframe education, support our students, and return to the sharing of positive messaging surrounding public education in the Commonwealth.

As PASA's new Executive Director, this position offers new challenges that I am excited to pursue with all of you. I look forward to this new role and to working with all of you.

A fresh start with a bright future ahead of us!!



## NATIONAL RECAP:

**[Parents Should Have a Voice in Their Kids' Education But We've Gone Too Far](#)**— As kids return to school, the focus on math, science, and [reading](#) has been sidelined by campaigns mounted in the name of “parents’ rights.” Advocates are demanding that books be banned from curricula and school libraries, targeting teachers and administrators based on viewpoints, and fighting for control of education boards. There is no question that parents deserve a say in shaping their children’s educations; they have moral and legal responsibility for their children, and the freedom to make fundamental decisions for their families. But the rallying cry of “parents’ rights” is being wielded to do far more than give parents their rightful voice. It is turning public schools into political battlegrounds, fracturing communities, and diverting time and energy away from teaching and learning. Read the rest of the story: **[“Parents Should Have a Voice in Their Kids' Education But We've Gone Too Far”](#)** (from Time, 9/20/22)

**[More States Are Allowing Children to Take Mental Health Days](#)**— With child mental health problems on the rise in the past few years, a growing number of states have adopted laws that let students take an excused absence if they feel anxious, depressed or need a day to “recharge.” A dozen [states](#) already have measures in place that allow kids to take off for mental health and not just physical health reasons. A handful of others\* are considering making similar changes to school absentee rules. Read the rest of the story: **[“More States Are Allowing Children to Take Mental Health Days”](#)** (from The Washington Post, 10/2/22)

**[School Choice Advocates Promised Students a Better Education. They Haven't Delivered](#)**—It’s an old idea: Give families a choice in where their children [attend school](#) and students will receive a better education. Not all schools are a good fit for all kids and some schools aren’t good for anyone. Free market logic says competition and choice will fix things. In practice, however, [school choice](#) hasn’t been the fix that proponents promised, although its application is varied. Read the rest of the story: **[“School Choice Advocates Promised Students a Better Education. They Haven't Delivered”](#)** (from The USA Today 10/3/22)

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS:

**[Bill Would Make School Lunches Free in State](#)**— House Democrat Emily Kinkead wants the state Legislature to make official what the Warren County School District already has — make school lunches free for all students. Kinkead, D-Pittsburgh, has introduced a legislative sponsorship memorandum for legislation that would extend free lunches beyond those who have a household income that is at least 185% of the federal poverty level. Read the rest of the story: **[“Bill Would Make School Lunches Free in State”](#)** (from Times Observer 9/19/22)

**[Inside Pa's Proposed 'Parental Bill of Rights,' Which Critics are Calling Homophobic](#)**— The education [culture wars](#) have reached Pennsylvania. Pledging to give parents more power over the type of content taught in schools, Republican state lawmakers have introduced legislation that would prohibit teachings about sexual orientation and gender identity in certain grades – an effort that mirrors and builds upon actions in other GOP-led states to limit the teaching of certain subjects, particularly among younger students. The “Parental Bill of Rights” legislation, as proponents call it, would prohibit schools in Pennsylvania – including public schools, charter schools and cyber charter schools – from teaching about sexual orientation or gender identity to students in kindergarten through

fifth grade. The legislation quickly earned the opposition of the state’s Democratic governor, and has highlighted ideological differences on education in the leadup to November’s midterm elections for governor and U.S. Senate. Read the rest of the story: **[“Inside Pa's Proposed 'Parental Bill of Rights,' Which Critics are Calling Homophobic”](#)** (from Pennsylvania Capital-Star 9/27/22)

**[EPA Doubles Aid for Electric, Natural Gas-Powered School Buses, Citing High Demand](#)**— The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will nearly double its first round of rebates for [“clean school buses”](#), awarding \$965 million in response to high demand. The rebates allow schools to replace existing diesel buses with zero- and low-emissions alternatives, including those that run on electricity and natural gas, and the equipment necessary to support them. The money is part of a \$5 billion fund created through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, signed by President Joe Biden last November. The funding for school buses will be distributed over five years. Read the rest of the story: **[“EPA Doubles Aid for Electric, Natural Gas-Powered School Buses, Citing High Demand”](#)** (from EducationWeek, 9/30/22)

## STATE NEWS:

**[PA Department of Education Celebrates Educators At Manheim Central School District](#)**— Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Executive Deputy Secretary Dr. Debora Carrera today visited an all-staff in-service day at Manheim Central Middle School to thank educators for their dedication and commitment to students and to talk about the initiative to bolster the commonwealth’s teacher workforce. Read the rest of the story: **[“PA Department of Education Celebrates Educators At Manheim Central School District”](#)** (from PA Department of Education, 10/7/22)

**[Return of Free Breakfast in Schools Welcomed by Students](#)**— If you ask Leovia Oddoie what her favorite things are, school breakfast makes her top 10. “Everything is good,” said the New Cumberland fifth-grader who attends Hillside Elementary School. “You want to eat everything.” What probably makes it even better for her and many students is that it now comes free of charge. Monday’s return of the free school breakfast program in West Shore School District as well as other schools throughout Pennsylvania has students swarming to cafeterias at the start of their day. Read the rest of the story: **[“Return of Free Breakfast in Schools Welcomed by Students”](#)** (from Pennlive, 10/5/22)

**[Changes to SNAP Income Thresholds Will Expand Eligibility for Benefits, Wolf Admin Says](#)**— Pennsylvania will increase the income threshold for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applicants next month, making the program accessible to more Pennsylvanians, Wolf administration officials said on Thursday. Beginning on Oct. 1, Pennsylvania will increase the income threshold for SNAP applicants to 200 percent of the [Federal Poverty Income Guidelines](#) (FPIG), the Department of Human Services said, adding that “more than 420,000 additional Pennsylvanians in more than 174,000 households will be newly eligible for SNAP” as a result of the change. Read the rest of the story:







# JOIN THE COMMUNITY

BY DR. JOHN SANVILLE, 2022-23 PASA PRESIDENT

As the school year continues to unfold normally here in Pennsylvania, Hurricane Ian destroyed much of Florida. We all knew it was coming- but were able to carry on. Not so in the Sunshine State. Ian destroyed communities, devastated lives, and turned paradise upside down. The magnitude of the storm overpowered so much and so many.

However, it did not take long for help to arrive. There was state, local, military, and federal assistance. Boats, planes, ATVs, helicopters, and people on foot entered areas to offer whatever help was needed. There are lots of badges and equipment and plans being relayed on the radio and in person.

Then the videos of Floridians helping each other started to show up. Four men in chest-high water pulled an elderly gentleman out of his truck and got him to safety. Fishermen patrolled the 'streets' in the boats- protecting property. Rapidly organized groups distributed water and food.

Dogs, cats, parrots, and every other kind of pet were carried and saved. Who was responsible for this? Communities.

We say 'community' often but do we really think about our relationships with the people and places our schools serve? Since we are still warming up this is a great time to shift our focus just a little bit.

Most of Pennsylvania's school districts include multiple townships/boroughs. The larger ones may include cities but even they are divided into smaller parts. But no matter how your district is set up – there are distinct areas- neighborhoods, subdivisions, regions, etc. full of people with kids attending your schools, parents who volunteer, teachers, administrators, bus drivers, etc. Schools do not exist in vacuums- rather they are the places that draw people together.

There are two communities that you should be working and interacting with. The first is school-based- so it includes your faculty, staff, and everyone who is a regular part of the educational process. These folks are the heartbeat that powers everything so make it part of your routine to touch base regularly by popping into each school/classroom. A friendly face is always welcome so be sure to have kind words and compliments at the ready. Encourage interaction between schools/ departments/grades that can include both adults and kids. Think outside of the box and encourage others to do the same. Field days, cooking/baking challenges, artistic endeavors, musical matches, athletic contests, etc. There are districts that have long-standing traditions of faculty vs. student sporting events that include T-shirts and cheering. There is no end to what can be done- and the wonderful thing is that there are multiple options at every budget point.

Then there is the community created by the common mission of providing education to the kids. That

is where your ingenuity and leadership will make the difference.

Provide meaningful opportunities for professional collaboration. Search for guest speakers with proven success. Seek out the best programs that will serve your population.

Facilitate teams that connect to the issues that need the most attention. Make sure that evaluations and feedback are professional. Create an atmosphere where teachers and staff feel comfortable discussing issues that are important to them. Make sure your website and social media presence provide a balanced view of what is going on. The district team needs the best of everyone on the roster.

The people who live in the geographical area your district covers rely on you as their contact for answers, information, and explanations.

Most likely you have many kinds of households where there are one or two parents, one or two languages, many faiths, and many levels of observance, renters, homeowners, people with generational roots, others who have just moved in, active participants, homebodies, professionals, hourly workers, some tall, some short, etc. It would be impossible to describe, accurately, any district's demographic in the space allotted here. We all have lots of different people, personalities, and parenting styles!

Developing community bonds is a process that – because of the diverse nature of our communities- cannot be wholly replicated by another. However let me give you some ideas that I have seen work well- and you can tweak them to suit your needs.

Parents and others mobilized for a purpose can be enormously helpful. Attend a meeting or have a meeting with the leader(s). Having a shared goal will focus more attention and energy on it.

Participate in that are community sponsored- a road race, a concert, a car wash, sporting events, local fairs, and anything that takes place and impacts your families where they live. Be visible and approachable.

Support your students and staff in their extracurricular endeavors. Know the parents/family members who are involved with the teams, groups, bands, clubs, etc. Go to games, matches, concerts, competitions, shows, and exhibitions. Be familiar with scores, stats, ranks, positions, and all measures that matter. Make available transportation and staffing when possible.

Offer praise, encouragement, and understanding. Let your pride in what they have done show.

Lest you think I am telling you to fill your calendars five nights a week with school/district things- I am not. You do not have to go to everything all the time. Select one or two things- maybe on the same night- and go.

There are other administrators who should be doing this too- so let them attend activities that you cannot. But stay connected to what is happening - all over the district- so that your texts and emails are meaningful. Follow schools, teams, and groups on social media. You set the standard in your district so be purposeful and genuine in all that you do.

Lend your support and time to the activities that are important to your students, your families, and everyone nearby. Create an environment that welcomes all.

Celebrate the successes and acknowledge the mistakes- because every community has both. Being recognized outside of the office is proof that you are firmly invested. Wear district/school gear and be the best raving fan ever.

Leadership takes many forms.



# AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND GROW

BY DR. SHERRI SMITH

*"Growth is the great separator between those who succeed and those who do not. When I see a person beginning to separate themselves from the pack, it's almost always due to personal growth."*  
John C. Maxwell

As educators, we understand and truly value the need for quality education for our students. The question becomes, do you believe in that same need for yourself, both personally and professionally? During these more strenuous years of leading in education, it has never been more important for each of us to pursue opportunities to improve and learn new skills. Not only do these newfound skills improve you personally, but also are a true investment to the work in your office, schools and districts.

PASA is proud to provide Pennsylvania's educational leaders with many different learning and networking opportunities to build upon your knowledge and skills.

Take the time to register for several of these upcoming PASA events to learn, engage with your peers, and hone your leadership abilities and techniques! We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events!

## WEBINAR SERIES: MANAGING THE RISKS -

August 2, 2022-January 18, 2023 - [Registration Still Open!](#)

- ♦ Record Retention, Right to Know, Board Conflict of Interests, and Litigation Holds; October 20 - Facilitator: Gareth D. Pahowka, Attorney, Stock & Leader
- ♦ Fiscal Responsibilities – Managing Revenues and Expenditures; November 15 - Facilitator: Hannah Barrick, Executive Director and PASBO Staff
- ♦ The Pennsylvania Public Official and Employees Ethics Act – Compliance and Potential Unintended Violations; December 13 - Facilitator: Mary Fox, Executive Director, State Ethics Commission
- ♦ Red-Flags and Salvaging your Career When Board Relationships Go South; January 18 - Facilitators: Dr. Sherri Smith, Director of Professional Development, Virginia Montgomery, General Counsel, and Linda McKay, Deputy General Counsel, PA Association of School Administrators

## 2022-23 NEW SUPERINTENDENTS' ACADEMIES -

(Each 25 PIL hours)- [Register Now!](#)

- ♦ Developed specifically to prepare and support new superintendents!
- ♦ Part 1, Strategic & Cultural Leadership - September 21 -22
- ♦ Part 2, Systems Leadership – November 17-18
- ♦ Part 3, Professional & Community Leadership Jan 9-10

**ASPIRING TO LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP** (Virtual) - February 3, 2023

**2023 PASA LEADERSHIP FORUM** - March 30-31, 2023 - Harrisburg PA (40 PIL hours)

Planning for 2023 Conference – Focused on the Legislative Landscape at the Federal and State Level, Creating Unified Advocacy Efforts to engage local and state officials and build a positive narrative around public education in Pennsylvania

**PA LEAGUE OF URBAN SCHOOLS (PLUS) 1-DAY CONFERENCE -**

NEW! – March 30, 2023 – Harrisburg, PA

**PASA WOMEN'S CAUCUS ANNUAL CONFERENCE** - May 21-23, 2023 Hershey, (30 PIL hours)

Keynote Speaker – Dr. Ruby Payne

**PASBO and PASA's - 2022-2023 School Budgeting and Finance Series – [Register Now!](#)**

PASBO and PASA to offer this workshop series to develop a deeper understanding of components of the budget plan and the specific roles that Superintendents, Business Managers and members of the School Board have to ensure a healthy and viable budget. PASBO and PASA will offer the first 3 components of this series at three different regions of the Commonwealth to minimize travel for participants. The core workshops include the following:

- ♦ Part I: Understanding the Basic Education Formula (BEF)
- ♦ Part 2: Federal Programs and Special Education Funding
- ♦ Part 3: Developing and Maintaining a Balanced Budget
- ♦ Part 4, Federal and State Advocacy, PASA Leadership Forum Conference in Harrisburg, March 30-31 (see above)

**PSBA/PASA FALL CONFERENCE -**

October 31-November 2, 2022

- ♦ Kalahari Resorts, Poconos
- ♦ In collaboration with PA School Boards Association

**PASA/AASA NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM -**  
New Cohort Date to be announced- Coming in 2023!

**2023 NATIONAL AASA CONFERENCE -**

San Antonio, Texas - February 16- 18, 2023

- ♦ PASA will host a State reception on February 17 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Plus....**

More events to come – Professional Book Studies, Webinars, Virtual Networking Communities, plus more....



## PA SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

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Year,” PASA Executive Director Dr. Sherri Smith said. “He is active in both state- and national-level advocacy and leadership in addition to achieving monumental accomplishments within his district and school community. Well done, Brian! I know you will represent your PA colleagues well in the coming year of events!”

Ephrata Area earned recognition as an AASA Learning 2025 Lighthouse School System under Dr. Troop’s guidance—one of just 13 districts nationwide to earn this distinction and serve as a model for positive change in public education.

“Our ‘Lighthouse’ systems are serving as thought-leader practitioners that are implementing bold, actionable steps on behalf of the broader education community to learn from and learn with as they have taken on the challenge of Learning 2025,” said Daniel A. Domenech, executive director, AASA about the Lighthouse initiative when it was launched in May. “As we emerge from the pandemic, it is critical to invoke future-focused best practices for the well-being, self-sufficiency and success of our young learners.”

Dr. Troop prioritizes student involvement as evidenced by adding a pair of student engagement facilitators to the Ephrata staff to help elevate the voice of students by identifying ways the district can ensure that all students feel like they belong.

And he’s identified outside-the-box ways to engage students, creating opportunities for student input on the redesign of the school’s library and engaging high school learners to repurpose and old school bus into a space for elementary students to create—a task that required high school students to apply practical knowledge to gut the bus and redesign its interior and elementary students to participate in a hands-on learning experience.

Dr. Troop utilizes his legislative prowess to successfully advocate on behalf of his school community and public schools across the Commonwealth. He’s fostered relationships with local legislative leaders including Sen. Ryan Aument and Sen. Scott Martin to lobby for education-related legislative priorities and the reform of cyber charter funding.

He’s also an active member of a number of boards and committees including the PASA Board of Governors as an I.U. 13 Representative, a member of the Innovative Teaching and Learning Committee, the Ephrata Area Education Foundation, and the Lancaster STEM Alliance.

As the Pennsylvania honoree, Dr. Troop and 49 other state honorees will be recognized on February 16, 2023 during the AASA National Conference on Education.

Congratulations to Brian—and all the nominees for their incredible contributions to their school communities!

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Education means inspiring someone’s mind,  
not just filling their head.

--Katie Lusk

## PASA COMMITTEE UPDATE:

The following members have been appointed committee chairs/representatives of PASA for 2022-23:

**President, Women’s Caucus:** Tina Kane, Marple Newtown

**President, PLUS Caucus of PASA:** Dr. Christopher Dormer, Norristown Area

**Chair, Advocacy Committee:** Dr. George Fiore, Chester County I.U.

**Chair, Legislative Committee:** Dr. Shane Hotchkiss, Bermudian Springs

**Chair, Audit:** Lynn Fuini-Hetten, Salisbury Twp.

**Chair, Elections Committee:** Dr. Jay Burkhart, South Western

**Chair, Membership Committee:** Dr. Jay Burkhart, South Western

**Chair, Professional Development Committee:** Dr. Francine Endler, Central I.U. 10

**Chair, Innovation & Technology Committee:** Dr. David Christopher, Cumberland Valley

**AASA Representatives\*:** Lee Ann Wentzel, Ridley (Exec. Board); Dr. Nicholas Guarente, Greenwood; Dr. Bridget O’Connell, Palisades; Dr. Gennaro R. Piraino, Jr., Randall Lutz, Baldwin-Whitehall; Franklin Regional; Dr. Shane Hotchkiss, Bermudian Springs

**PLGIT Representative:** Dr. Samuel Lee, Bensalem Township, Dr. Thomas Lesniewski, Punxsutawney Area

**PIAA Representative:** Lee Ann Wentzel, Ridley

**EasyProcure Representative:** Dr. Mark Leidy, Mechanicsburg Area

Updated lists of members serving on these committees are maintained on the PASA website by visiting:

[www.pasa-net.org/committees](http://www.pasa-net.org/committees).

Thank you to all PASA members who served on the PASA Board of Governors and PASA committees in 2021-22—and all those who expressed an interest in serving on our various committees this year!

## AT THE CAPITOL

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result of the change. Read the rest of the story: “[Changes to SNAP Income Thresholds Will Expand Eligibility for Benefits, Wolf Admin Says](#)” (from Pennsylvania Star Capital, 9/22/22)

[Pa. Waived Its Basic Skills Requirement for Educators. Will it Attract More Teachers?](#)— Emma Lambert easily passed the writing portion of the basic skills test required of Pennsylvania teaching candidates. The math section took a few more attempts. As for reading? She failed 12 times before hiring a tutor. At lucky 13, she finally passed the test. The declining pipeline of educators-to-be has experts worried the teacher shortage will only get worse. All in all, the whole venture, including a tutor for math, cost the then-East Stroudsburg University student nearly \$3,000, and more than three years later she’s still frustrated the state placed so much emphasis on standardized tests — almost upending her career plans. At least for the next three years, Pa. students will no longer have to pass the so-called basic skills tests in reading, math, and writing, or meet the requirement through an alternative, to enroll in teacher preparation programs. Facing a teacher shortage crisis, the state legislature in June agreed to waive the requirement, giving officials a chance to study whether the test really improved the quality of teaching candidates or just deterred students from pursuing the profession. Read the rest of the story: “[Pa. Waived Its Basic Skills Requirement for Educators. Will it Attract More Teachers?](#)” (from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* 9/17/22)





# LESSON FROM THE CANDY AISLE

BY ADAM KULIKOWSKI

Last week, I witnessed a young boy in Target have what many would call a meltdown in the candy aisle. But this wasn't a typical temper tantrum—at least not in how it played out.

Why?

Because it ended as quickly as it began—and it wasn't because his father gave in to his boy's love of all things sweet.

No, this father had a great communication technique—and he might not have even known why what he did worked. But there are some valuable lessons in his approach from which we all can learn.

When his son became upset, he immediately stopped shopping and knelt down to his level. As his son bellowed out proclaiming his love of the sweet goodness Hershey's provides (can you really blame him?!), his father from an eye-to-eye level proclaimed his love of chocolate too and how he too was upset that he couldn't have any right now.

In communications terms, he built a shared value with his son in their love of sweets and an instant connection. He created a new sense of calm by mirroring both his love of candy and his anger that he could not have some right now. The adversaries became allies.

Mirroring, psychology experts tell us—and the young boy proved—is a nonverbal way to show empathy. It signals that we are connected to that person in some way.

In the candy aisle, the father and son left together—both 'upset' that they couldn't have chocolate at that moment. But neither was screaming.

As I watch the interaction of this father and son, a few thoughts came to mind.

First, I now wanted candy—and my loving wife was not with me to mirror my love of chocolate and empathize with me as she guided me empty-handed from the aisle.

Second, the lessons from the candy aisle are transferable to how we can have successful interactions with our school communities.

Our father eased off his power stance towering above his son to an eye-to-eye level. While he did this in the literal sense to lessen the intimidation, the means can be figurative as well.

When we communicate with others, we need to be approachable. Does your position of power make it difficult for your colleagues to approach you? Do parents feel intimidated? Can you interact in your school community in a way that shows shared values? We should do all we can to see each other eye-to-eye without power imbalances.

Where is your colleague/parent/friend coming from and how could you meet them in a peer space?

The father saw the anger in his son when he couldn't get what he wanted. Instead of shutting him down by yelling at him, or pulling him from the store, he chose to relate to his emotions. Through that connection, he eased the tension and calmed the rough waters.

In a climate where our school leaders are often dealing with choppy waters at board meetings, utilizing the tools in our toolbox such as mirroring can help create more positive conversation opportunities.

We too can find ways to connect on the emotions our communications partners share.

The next time you find yourself 'in the candy aisle' mirror the emotions of your communications partner and come to their level. You just might find that the conversation changes in a positive way.



## COMMUNICATIONS TIP OF THE MONTH

### Create a strategic media list

You're always going to be looking for new, creative ways to maintain a public image as create new initiatives or policies in your school communities. So make sure to lay the groundwork for building your contact list of media connections you can rely on. This will provide you with a backlog of resources to pull from when you're seeking to gain more reach.

In that sense, put together an organized spreadsheet of potential contacts and influencers within your community who cover education-related issues. Much like getting to know your audience, learn as much as you can about these potential media contacts. And most importantly, develop ways to relate to them with mutual respect and support in your endeavors. Use your pitches to contact them.

Source: Mediatoolkit

**Women's Caucus**  
Annual Fall Dinner

**When - Wednesday, November 16, 2022**  
4:00-5:15p.m. Registration

**Where - Maggiano's Restaurant**  
205 Mall Boulevard, King of Prussia, PA

**Dinner Details - Cost of Dinner \$65 by October 24, \$75 after that date, Appetizers & Cash Bar**

**Registration - Can be made online by clicking [here](#).**  
Or by check, made payable to PASA and sent to:  
PASA, Attention: Anna Maria Stankowicz  
2608 Market Place, Harrisburg, PA 17110

**Featured Presentation**  
Dr. Colleen Lelli, Cabrini University  
Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools:  
The Importance of Mental Health  
Awareness and Positive School Climate

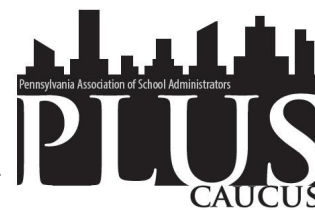
This year's donations will be collected for  
Philabundance to support children, families, and seniors  
in need of healthy meals. Philabundance Chief Executive  
Officer, Loree D. Jones will be a guest speaker. Click  
[here](#) to donate online or donate at the dinner event.

**PHILABUNDANCE**



# RETURNING TO NORMAL OR ESTABLISHING A NEW ONE?

BY CHRISTOPHER DORMER



Though I approach the beginning of every school with excitement and anticipation, the start of the 2022-23 school year seemed to bring something a little extra. There was a definite sigh of relief that COVID would not be hanging over our heads like a grand piano hanging by a fraying rope. No more mandates, no more requirements, no more recommendations, and no more all of the things we took on since March 2020 just to survive. Even more exciting in my district was an increase in state funding that can only be described as transformational as one of the Level Up districts. Imagine my excitement to add over 50 new staff positions to undo a decade of cuts and program reductions. As I was preparing to welcome teachers and students back in late August, starting my fifth year as Superintendent, the message I wanted to share was clear - we get to have a normal school year.

As our operations team began to remove distancing of furniture and return certain classroom items, I remember seeing one of our Kindergarten classrooms with desks in collaborative arrangements, a full rug area for the class to sit around the teacher, a reading corner with pillows, and spaces for small group instruction. I shouted aloud, "This looks like school again!" This certainly was a return to the old normal, best practices where five-year-olds can learn and thrive. In that same classroom, I noticed a huge footprint of floor space in one of the corners. It took me a minute to realize what used to be there. Prior to the pandemic, each elementary classroom had sets of long tables with banks of desktop computers for student use. During the pandemic, we became a 1-1 school district, and have committed to keeping that reality moving forward. Each child would have a Chromebook for more individualized and personalized learning. Teachers would have more resources to leverage - more technology and more space. This was part of a new normal in all classrooms.

So this "normal" school year I was so excited for - would it be a return to the old, or an imagining of the new? In terms of our schools and our instructional program, it is going to be the best of both as we work to establish what will be the same, what will be different,

and ultimately, how this will be better as we look to best use time, spaces, and resources.

As I reflect on personally and professionally what I want my "normal" to be as Superintendent, it likewise will be a blend of old and new, but definitely will allow me to be better.

**1. I will continue to leverage my network.** During the pandemic, I met with colleagues more than ever, sharing thoughts, ideas, plans, and strategies. Having a great network of colleagues through my IU, the PLUS Caucus, and PASA kept me grounded and sane, whether that was on Zoom, phone calls, or simple text messages. I am excited to have built those personal connections and relationships to be able to now leverage their experiences and expertise in teaching, learning, and strategies to best serve students, families, and community members.



**2. Advocacy works!** Over my first four years as Superintendent, I spent countless hours and days sharing the story of my district with legislators, describing what having our needs met would look like. This past budget paid off that investment of time, effort, and energy in spades. This past budget also demonstrated that we won a battle, but the war is not over. As Superintendents, we need to continue to fight and advocate for public schools, our communities, and our children as battlefields continue to shift and present us with new challenges.

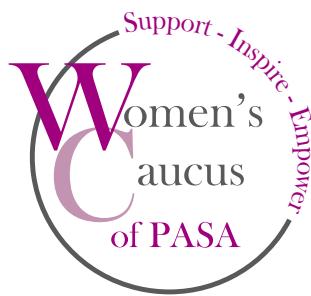
**3. I need to keep myself learning and growing.** I never could have predicted what we would be asked to navigate these past few years. Staying engaged in several study councils and PD opportunities through PASA and AASA helped me to keep my compass pointing north. Education is going to continue to evolve. We all need to be the lead learners ready to learn, grow, and evolve with it.

Normal will always be genuine excitement for what I do in service to students, staff, families, and my community.

*Christopher Dormer is the proud Superintendent of Schools of the Norristown Area School District in Montgomery County. He is the recently elected 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.*







# NATIONAL PRINCIPALS MONTH

BY DR. MAUREEN D. LETCHER



Happy National Principals Month to all of the amazing principals and assistant principals!

Wow, what an amazing year this has been!

Yes, we are only into the first two months, but if these past two are any indication of what is to come, we are lucky educators.

Clearly, in the wake of the pandemic, we were left with a great deal of concern in education. While attending the National Association of Secondary School Principals Educational Summit this year, there was continuous chatter about the lack of accountability and how we get back to the level of expectations that we had pre-

COVID. In my communications with many of you, it quickly became evident that this concern was/is statewide.

In my own building, I had my teachers complete a survey titled "Accountability With Reasonability" to brainstorm ideas to help our students have better accountability coming into this school year. We made some handbook changes, came up with ideas to consistently implement, and read articles on student accountability. Never have I been more thrilled that much of this was for not. We all walked nervously into the 2022-2023 school year holding our breath and hoping.

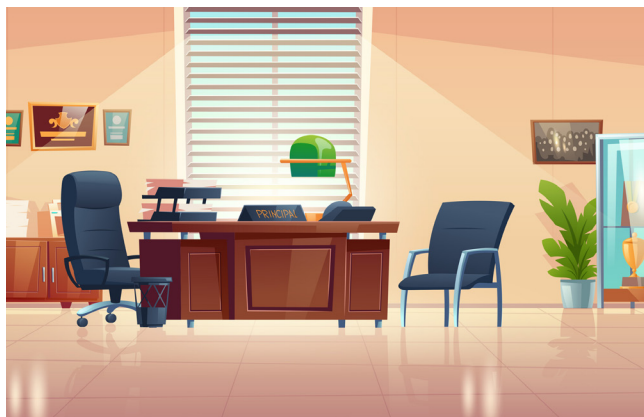
The students were ready - ready to sit in class, ready to do their work, ready to be involved, and ready to be held accountable. Educators began to exhale the breath that they had been holding.

As we continue through National Principals Month, we need to take time to recognize the principals and assistant principals who spent sleepless nights worried about so many issues, like the one listed above. The teachers are amazing - but often they can only be as good as those leading them. Many of you worked tirelessly to keep the morale of your staff up through the last two-and-a-half years. This has all paid off for the students in our schools.

We have strong and resilient principals. When my son Mitchell was small, a question he asked me many times was, "Mama, if you had a superpower what would it be?" My answers have ranged from being invisible to being able to fly to reading people's minds - which, the more I think about it, may not be a good idea as a senior high principal! Principals and assistant principals, when I look at you, I see the exact same thing I see when I look at the superheroes in the movies - many heroes with very different personalities and countless powers. However, the superheroes in the movies typically only have one power.

You are so much more ahead of the game because each of you possesses numerous superpowers. You demonstrate being altruistic and the desire to make a difference, as well as the superpower of thinking outside of the box to make things better for others; you overcome adversity, and you are the picture of success.

Keep making a difference because it **does** matter! Happy Principals Month. Take time to celebrate yourself.



## Thank you to our Platinum Sponsors:



Last month, the Biden administration hosted the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health to “catalyze action for the millions of Americans struggling with food insecurity and diet-related diseases like diabetes, obesity, and hypertension.”

Ahead of the conference, the administration released its [national strategy](#) — outlining steps necessary to reach the goal of ending hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases, while reducing related health disparities.

The strategy includes five pillars: 1) Improving food access and affordability, 2) Integrating nutrition and health, 3) Empowering all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices, 4) Supporting physical activity for all, and 5) Enhancing nutrition and food security research.

Most notable for district leaders in the strategy was an explicit commitment to advance a pathway to free, healthy school meals for all. The national strategy expressed the importance of school nutrition programs and the need to fully leverage them as a core intervention to improve child health and child hunger. It calls for a “healthy meals for all” approach to reorient the school meal programs from an ancillary service to an integral component of the school day and allow schools to focus on providing the highest quality meals and engaging children around healthy food.

Essential components highlighted for this approach are expanding efforts to increase access to local and regional food systems, enabling more schools to cook meals from scratch by funding training and equipment purchases, investing in the school nutrition workforce, and expanding nutrition education for children. The Biden administration committed to working with Congress to expand access to healthy, free school meals for 9 million more children by 2032.

That commitment will require buy-in from Congress, but USDA does have some flexibility to expand the Community Eligibility Provision (a top nutrition priority for AASA) on its own. While speaking to reporters, U.S. Sec. of Agriculture Tom Vilsack mentioned this flexibility but did not provide specifics. AASA encourages USDA to use every tool at its disposal to expand CEP to allow more schools to participate in the program and ensure it is also financially viable for them to do so.

Additionally, the national strategy focuses on creating healthier food environments and a healthier food supply. As such, USDA will continue to work to reduce sodium in school meals with the goals of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the FDA’s voluntary sodium target. While AASA recognizes the importance of promoting healthy eating habits around sodium, enriched whole grains, and dairy intake, it is important to acknowledge that healthy meals are only healthy if students eat them. We continue to engage in conversations with USDA around the need for reasonable nutritional standards that provide flexibility for school nutrition programs and do not lead to unnecessary food waste and reduced participation.

Other commitments from the Biden administration to support schools in this work include:

- The administration will continue to support the expansion of Summer EBT (*another nutrition priority for AASA*).
- USDA will provide training and resources to school meal program operators on incorporating more indigenous and traditional

## THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

foods into school meals to improve access.

- USDA will advance a new Healthy Meals Incentive initiative—supported by ARP funding—to support schools’ efforts to improve the nutritional quality of school meals. This initiative will challenge all players within the K-12 food supply chain to increase the availability of and access to healthy offerings, recognize School Food Authorities (SFAs) that are innovating in offering nutritious school meals, and provide funding to small and/or rural SFAs to improve the nutritional content of meals offered through the Child Nutrition Programs.

- USDA will work to strengthen and diversify suppliers that provide healthy, nutritious and local foods to schools and nutrition assistance programs by assisting small and underserved farmers and businesses to become vendors for school meals.

- The U.S. Dept. of Education will provide guidance to states and school districts on how they can use funds under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act grants and ARP funds to support physical activity for children.

- The U.S. Dept. of Education will, through the Engage Every Student Initiative, promote strategies for increasing participation in physical fitness programs and for incorporating physical activity in summer learning and engagement in after-school programs. Finally, the strategy included a “Call-to-Action for a Whole-of-Society Response.” Here are the highlights related to K-12 schools:

- States and school districts should increase investment in school food programs such as providing investments to support kitchen infrastructure and training school nutrition professionals.

- States, localities and K-12 schools should consider incorporating culinary arts and nutrition education into schools.

- Philanthropy should support pilots that foster collaboration between food service programs at K-12 schools and colleges or universities to synergize efforts around workforce training and food procurement.

- The food industry should increase the availability of and access to foods that are low in sodium and added sugars—including foods meeting or exceeding FDA’s voluntary sodium reduction targets—and high in whole grains, particularly for the K-12 market.

You can watch the entire conference [recording here](#).

So far, reaction from Congress to the conference has been mixed and as could be expected, fairly partisan. The conference overall did not have a strong bipartisan showing—U.S. Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN) was the only GOP lawmaker in attendance. Additionally, on the day of the conference, House Ed and Labor Committee Ranking Member Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) released a statement criticizing the event—claiming it did not engage key stakeholders and dismissed it as partisan. Meanwhile, support from Democratic lawmakers poured in for both the conference and its policy proposals.

The path to a bipartisan agreement to expand access to school meals is unclear, but there is hope that the Senate will take up Child Nutrition Reauthorization before the end of this year—building on the momentum of the House Democrats’ version: the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act, which passed the House Ed and Labor Committee on July 28. The bill, in its current form, would permanently expand CEP, which would be a longer-term solution than any USDA action, but given the current Republican opposition to the policy it will require strong advocacy to get it included in the final bill.

## ***Schools and Social Media: The Critical Need for Verification and Dedicated Reporting Processes***

AASA is proud to support ***Schools and Social Media: The Critical Need for Verification and Dedicated Reporting Processes***, joint project led by the National School Public Relations Associations (NSPRA) and Consortium for School Network (CoSN). The project found that the lack of dedicated verification and reporting processes for federally recognized K-12 education institutions on social media platforms is causing a strain on school districts around the country.

In a survey of school communication and school technology professionals, more than 50% of respondents indicated they have dealt with fake-official or mock accounts that impersonate their district or organization, while only a third indicated they were able to get their organization verified on various social media platforms. Additional findings include:

- Overall, a quarter of respondents indicated that within the last two years their educational organizations have applied to be verified on social media and have been rejected (25%).
- Respondents indicated that among their educational organizations:
  - 59% have dealt with accounts that harass, intimidate or bully students.
  - 45% have dealt with social media platforms not removing reported accounts/posts that harass, intimidate or bully their students.

Help spread the word about the importance of dedicated verification and reporting processes for K-12 education institutions on social media, using this [campaign toolkit](#) to urge social media platforms to make it easier for schools to accurately represent themselves on social media and to report accounts that harass, intimidate, bully or otherwise negatively target students.

## ***In the October Issue of School Administrator magazine:***

The October edition of AASA's monthly publication highlights the rise of electric buses; several articles on upgrading school facilities; policies that protect gender diversity and more.

## **Quotes:**

"The key to this activity is being brutally honest with yourself on the differences between your intentions and your behavior. We judge ourselves based on intent, others on performance. Use this activity to tell yourself the truth of where you are at so you can mentally chart your path forward to start next year."

-From [Behavior Never Lies](#) in the October edition of AASA's School Administrator magazine by PJ Caposey

The fact of the matter is that it is our job to teach kids to think critically, not to teach them what to think. Attempts to limit the truth that we can share concerning the atrocities of our county's past will only ensure that they continue. ... We need to support our students as they read all of the sides and think for themselves.

-From [When We Know Better](#) in the October edition of AASA's School Administrator magazine by Patrick Larkin

## **Thank you to our Diamond Sponsors:**



## **Thank you to our Gold Sponsors:**





# HOW EXTENDED DAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS CAN HELP RECLAIM UNFINISHED LEARNING TIME

BY DENICE RICCIOTTI, DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS, RIGHT AT SCHOOL



The COVID-19 pandemic upended education in 2020, leaving many schools and families concerned about the consequences of unfinished learning.

Let's take a look at the numbers, then explore how districts and schools are reclaiming unfinished learning time and improving academic outcomes with high-quality enrichment.

## ***What the Research Says***

- While there have been some signs of rebounding, the impact of the pandemic on student learning **remains significant**, with math and reading achievement levels continuing to be behind pre-pandemic averages. Traditionally underserved students continue to be the most affected.
- 90% of K-12 public school employees are concerned about students in their school **falling behind** as a result of the pandemic.

## ***What Can School and District Leaders Do?***

To reclaim unfinished learning time, many administrators are looking for strategies outside the traditional school day. As a result, a growing number of districts are turning to extended day enrichment.

High-quality enrichment before and after school provides a tremendous opportunity to infuse extra learning time into the day — without causing student burnout. That's one reason why the American Rescue Plan specifically allocated funding for after school enrichment (and summer camp) programs — and extended learning programs are fully eligible for **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief** (ESSER) funding.

As you may have also heard, the US Department of Education recently launched "Engage Every Student" with a bold call to action for districts to use their ARP, ESSER and other available dollars to provide robust Out of School Time opportunities. The PA Dept of Ed's new budget allows for districts to use funding for extended after school enrichment programs as well.

## ***Finding an Extra 1,000 Hours for Learning***

Every hour students spend at school beyond normal class time is a golden opportunity to enhance their educational experience and address the learning consequences of COVID-19. Children who participate in before and after school programs can spend up to five

additional hours in school each day — or up to 1,000 extra hours per year under the care of educators.

## ***Improving Academic Outcomes***

A growing body of research suggests that children who participate in high-quality before and after school enrichment programs see improved **academic achievement outcomes**. This includes **improvements** in:

- Math and reading grades
- Homework completion
- School attendance
- Class participation
- Engagement in learning
- Graduation rates
- And more

## ***How to Find the Right Partner***

There are several things to consider when seeking a partner to provide extended day enrichment. For example, a high-quality provider will:

- Deliver a clearly defined, intentional program structure that aligns with your district's strategic objectives and priorities, thereby reinforcing school day learning
- Provide opportunities for academic enrichment and social-emotional growth through a fully developed curriculum that is aligned to state and/or national standards
- Offer enrichment activities in a variety of subjects including STEM, English language arts, literacy, social studies, fine arts, and more
- Provide daily, consistent homework assistance that helps students think critically and reach answers on their own
- Create a learning environment that is engaging and fun

## ***Extra Time for Learning and Fun***

As districts continue to take steps to help students close academic gaps, before and after school enrichment can provide an effective way to add extra time for learning to each child's day.

With extended learning opportunities, districts can help students catch up, get excited about their learning, and make school an extra fun place to be.

# MEMBER NEWS

## REGION 8

**Nicole Dull** became the first female superintendent of Conemaugh Township Area in October when she took the reins of the Somerset County district.

## Region 16

The Danville Area School District selected **Dr. Molly Nied** as its next superintendent. A graduate of Danville, Nied will begin her service to the district on November 14.

## Region 28

**Ralph Cecere, Jr.** will become the next leader of Homer-Center after the resignation of former superintendent **Curtis Whitesel**. Cecere served as the Portage Area Junior/Senior Principal since 2006 and possesses more than 30 years of public education experience.

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

## PASA CALENDAR

All programs and meetings are virtual.  
See the PASA web site at [www.pasa-net.org](http://www.pasa-net.org).

### OCTOBER

- 14 Summit for Assistant Superintendents and Supervisors
- 20 Managing the Risks: Record Retention, Right to Know and Litigation Holds
- 31-2 PASA/PSBA Fall Conference (Poconos)

### NOVEMBER

- 15 Managing the Risks: Fiscal Responsibilities - Managing Revenues and Expenditures
- 16 Women's Caucus Annual Fall Dinner
- 17-18 New Superintendents' Academy, Part 2: Systems Leadership
- 28, 29 Basics of School Budgeting and Finance: Federal Programs and Special Education Funding

### DECEMBER

- 6 Basics of School Budgeting and Finance: Federal Programs and Special Education Funding
- 13 Managing the Risks: The PA Public Official and Employees Ethics Act—Compliance and Potential Unintended Violations

## EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel Series



The EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel Series, which is co-hosted by AASA, CoSN and edWeb.net and sponsored by ClassLink, aired its most recent live broadcast, *Creating and Leading a Professional Team of Lifelong Learners* on Monday, October 10, 2022, at 5:00 pm Eastern Time. Superintendents Dr. Deborah Kerr, St. Francis School District, WI, Dr. John Malloy, San Ramon Valley Unified School District, CA and Marlon Styles, Middletown City Schools, OH, joined host/moderator Ann McMullan to share the strategies they use to assure that not only students, but also their entire school district staff have the opportunities to participate in ongoing, effective and impactful technology professional learning opportunities. The Superintendents' discussion included a look at the CoSN "One-Pager" on Effective Technology Professional Learning (available at <https://www.cosn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Superintendents-Initiative-PD.pdf>.) Each Superintendent offered examples of how the strategies and policies they implement in their districts align with the best practices described in the CoSN one-page document on Effective Technology Professional Learning. They also explained how their district professional learning programs support not only the improvement of technology skills, but also have a positive impact on district-wide pedagogy practices. If you missed the October 10, 2022 live broadcast, you can access the free recording and podcast version at: <https://home.edweb.net/webinar/supers20221010/>

The EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel Series is free for all participants. You are also welcome to register for future EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel broadcasts as well as access previous broadcasts at <https://home.edweb.net/supers/>.

### CoSN Cybersecurity Resources

October is Cybersecurity Awareness month. School districts are prime targets for attacks on their digital networks. CoSN is pleased to provide a number of resources to assist Superintendents and school leaders in mapping out effective strategies to prevent cyberattacks on their networks as well as how to respond when such attacks do occur. One of the newest tools is the *CoSN Cybersecurity Leadership Game* which was designed to build school leaders' skills and experience in managing responses to cyberattacks. In addition to the CoSN Cybersecurity Leadership Game, additional free resources for addressing cybersecurity in K-12 organizations can be found at <https://www.cosn.org/edtech-topics/cybersecurity/>

CoSN Membership: If you, your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact Me'Shell Sheffield, CoSN Director of Membership and State Chapters, at [MSheffield@cosn.org](mailto:MSheffield@cosn.org).

