

# PAASA Flyer

Vol. 65, NO. 12- September 2023

Proud Leadership for  
Pennsylvania Schools

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## New Superintendent Induction Program

**For educational leaders, by educational leaders**

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 the leader is experiencing.

**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

#### President:

Dr. John Sanville, Superintendent  
Unionville-Chadds Ford School District

#### Treasurer:

Lynn Fuini-Hetten, Superintendent  
Salisbury Township School District

#### President-Elect/Secretary

Dr. George Fiore, Executive Director  
Chester County I.U.

#### 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 1st of each month.

#### Past President:

Dr. Jay Burkhart, Superintendent  
South Western School District

#### Executive Director:

Dr. Sherri L. Smith

#### Director of Professional Development:

Dr. Michele M. Balliet

#### Director of Communications:

Adam Kulikowski

# From the Executive Director

*New school year brings optimism and opportunity for collaboration*



**By Dr. Sherri Smith**

Executive Director, PASA

What a great time of year! Schools have opened their doors and our students are busy in their classes and extracurricular activities. I personally love the freshness of September – the excitement of a new school year, football season, and crisp cool mornings. I also look forward to heading out across the state and spending time with Pennsylvania’s school leaders – the best part of the job!

The past few weeks I have heard from many superintendents that their year is off to a great start. Students are happy, staff are in a good place, and parents are more positive and trusting. This warms the heart to know that we are seeing the resolve in the trust and connections in our local communities. A giant step forward!

And then there are the stories from other superintendents who have dealt with unique challenges to start their year. For example - some of our school leaders have had to close their schools due to flooding and other natural disasters. There have been concerns about students with weapons on property. Others have navigated student health emergencies or child abuse claims.

Maybe the one event that stands out this year is the escaped convict in Chester County for the past two weeks. As this dangerous individual hid in nearby neighborhoods, the local school buildings became the centers for crisis teams while hundreds of local, state, and federal law enforcement took control and closed off streets and neighborhoods. This situation had an incredible impact on the day-to-day operations of these schools – a vivid reminder that our schools do not operate in isolation but are an integral part of the broader community.

A reminder to us all that we need to continue to strive to build stronger working relationships with all aspects of the community.

The notion that schools need to engage community resources to support schools and students is a long-standing theme of education reform. However have we, as school leaders, really leveraged a mutual relationship? This is a particularly important conversation after the trust between many schools and communities was fractured over the course of the pandemic.

Over the years, society has added a mountain of non-academic duties onto schools, including social, medical, and psychological responsibilities, while student

populations have become increasingly diverse, and increasingly at risk. Many schools are struggling to carry out our basic mission to educate students while being challenged to provide for their social and emotional needs.

No doubt our schools cannot do it alone; they need to pursue opportunities to partner and collaborate with community-invested partners.

To add to this conversation, schools are currently challenged to provide for greater innovation and creativity in their instructional practices. To succeed in these innovations, we need to look at other learning environments outside of the school walls. Maybe the question becomes “how do we develop partnerships for mutual benefit and support for students and communities?”

Have we ever asked ourselves how the school system benefits the community? What value and contributions do your schools bring to your community and society? This may be a good question to ponder as we work to regain trust and positive interactions with parents and community partners.

Alternatively, how does your local community benefit the education of students? Here are just a few to ponder: Community agencies, such as law enforcement, and child welfare, offer protective factors that create a safe and supportive environment inside and outside of our schools. Services like tutoring, after-school activities, and volunteering can be led by community members and organizations to further support the needs of students and families.

Student mental health and counseling services can be contracted and provided by county services and private providers. Local businesses and organizations can provide on-the-job training, guest speaking engagements, and apprenticeships for students for workforce development and future employment of students.

School and community engagement is critical to the future success of our public schools and the students we serve today. We cannot do it alone. Think about how you are reaching out to your community and coming together for mutual respect, mutual trust, and mutual benefit. The involvement of community members in schools can only improve the overall quality of education and life for your students.

# From the President's Pen

## *Greetings Across the Commonwealth...*



By Dr. John Sanville

2022-23 PASA President



Ah...it is September. School has started and for most of us, the harried days and hard labor of prepping for that first day are officially over. That is something I learned as a new administrator: teachers focus on the last day of school and the unscheduled weeks ahead while those of us in the office buckle down amid piles and papers and to-do lists.

Yes, we take time off but the staffing, budget, curricula, etc. wait for us when we return. Now is our time to re-entrust the schools to the teachers and building staff who are refreshed and ready. It is a dichotomy unique to education- where the two most integral groups have totally different things to do in the summer!

So we are back to the sunny days of September in the Keystone State. Here in the southeastern corner, it is still summer although we are getting hints that cooler weather is coming. The air conditioning is still running.

There is not yet a noticeable change in attire save for the occasional students whose enthusiastic parents have dressed them in corduroy or wool despite the temperatures. That does seem to happen almost every year. There is a little satisfaction when small things are predictable.

Now that we have settled in and have caught our breath it is time to get back to work. All kinds of situations are crossing our desks and landing in our inboxes. One of the upsides of this position is that there are other administrators who can handle the common beginning-of-the-year issues: schedules, lockers, transportation, athletics, and more. Many of these situations are quickly remedied. Those that require more attention are deftly handled by the principals. You can turn your focus to the district and statewide matters.

The big picture issues are omnipresent: curricular and economic adaptations needed to meet state/federal guidance; building and facility concerns; staff and hiring; academic achievement; and perhaps most important of all - the climate of your district. This is a hefty list but when you are in charge your responsibilities are significant.





Guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the US Department of Education can be open to interpretation and modification depending on factors that are unique to your population. Sometimes we need legal assistance to ensure we are in compliance. Funny when I was in middle school 'guidance' referred to the counselor's office where you went for a late pass or to ask about a course for the next year.

UCFSD is a smaller district - we have six schools, the central office, a stadium, and some outbuildings. Even so, it seems that there is a big project just about every year: upgrading HVAC, new windows, replacing floors, painting projects... the list goes on.

We do not anticipate ever having every building and office updated at the same time. That is just how this process goes so it is included in all plans.

By now, hopefully, all hiring has been completed - but it is more likely that some of us have a few holes to fill. The 60-day rule comes into play now. We usually have a few long-term subs holding the places for teachers from other districts. Some years, we have administrative and support positions in need.

Whatever the case may be, know that in the short term, you and your team can survive and thrive! There is a light at the end of the tunnel in the form of your newest staff member.

Academic achievement is the heart of what we do. How we teach to generate it, how we measure it, how we share results with families and PDE, and how we adjust and adapt pedagogy to improve it are all elements of those two familiar words.

Having curricula that provide teachers and students with engaging and creative materials to spark ideas and independent thinking is ideal; but not the only route to successful education. Most important is that all participants in the classroom have invested their time, opened their minds, and are able to work together. It may sound simple, but learning occurs when there is a teacher and a student. Education happens all over the world in a wide range of circumstances - your district included.

Workplace climate i.e.- the way people feel and act while at work measures the tone you have set. Think about your schools... are they filled with positive energy that is visible and palpable? Think about your office staff ... are they friendly, productive, and supportive of each other? Think about your inner circle ... do they form a cohesive, focused, and creative team that represents district goals? Think about yourself ... do you bring the can-do attitude and Fanness with you every day? We have many opportunities every day to direct the environment, so it is never too early or too late.

Success is a funny thing. One day we are riding high and just as quickly the tables turn and the mojo seems

# Region News:

## Region 3:

Penn Hills superintendent Nancy Hines recently retired after serving the district as its leader since 2015. Assistant Superintendent Dawn Golden will serve as the interim superintendent until the position is filled.

## Region 7:

The Belle Vernon Area school board voted on September 5 to approve the hire of Timothy Glasspool as the district's next superintendent. Glasspool previously served as the Penncrest School District superintendent. He will begin his role at Belle Vernon on Oct. 2

## Region 22:

Pennridge School District has a new leader. Its school board tabbed Angelo Berrios as its next superintendent recently. Berrios joins the district after serving as the principal at Abington Senior High School in Montgomery County. Berrios will replace David Bolton who had served in the lead role since 2018 and will retire at the end of October.

*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 website at [www.pasa-net.org](http://www.pasa-net.org) (Click on the "Leadership Development" button and look for "Career Center.")*

to have disappeared. This phenomenon is human, so it impacts schools, entertainment, families, sports, and more. Recently Phillies shortstop Trea Turner was in a slump after signing a 10-year multimillion dollar contract. Philadelphia can be tough on its players and Trea knew that. He was down in the dumps and then IT happened. Phillies fans started cheering for him! Loud and proud they proclaimed their support. And guess what after a supportive standing ovation - the mood turned, and Turner started playing like the superstar he is. The ballpark climate shift changed Turner's game.

I leave you with a positive Philly sports story to prove that anything is possible. My many thanks for a year that exceeded my expectations. I have made new friends, learned about all corners of Pennsylvania, and know how privileged I am to have led this association. As it is still baseball season... batter up! Dr. George Fiore is on deck and I know he will hit it out of the park.

Cheers.



# RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30.



*Take action today to ensure your PASA benefits continue after September 30.*

*Please disregard if you have already submitted your dues for the 2023-24 membership year.*

**T**he Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators is a professional education organization that specifically serves commissioned officers and public school system leaders in Pennsylvania. We work diligently to ensure that school leaders have timely and critical information needed to meet the challenges of operating today's schools.

We advocate for public education with the Governor and General Assembly at the state level and work with the American Association of School Administrators to advocate at the national level on numerous educational issues. PASA provides several quality professional development programs with Act 45 PIL hours, legal support for commissioned officer contracts, and networking with colleagues across the state.

We encourage you to renew your membership. Don't miss out on the PASA Weekly Updates, monthly newsletter, professional advice, legislative updates, special reports, and periodic briefings on emerging news and issues.

Be informed and stay connected. Renew your [PASA membership](#) today for the new PASA membership year which begins October 1. Members who renew by October 31 also will be included in the 2023-24 Membership Directory.

## **DIRECT MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS TO:**

Anna Maria Stankoczi  
[amstankoczi@pasa-net.org](mailto:amstankoczi@pasa-net.org)

## **AASA Membership Renewals:**

When you join both the AASA and PASA, AASA provides **professional liability insurance** AND **funds for legal expenses** to qualifying members. See the [AASA website](#) for a full list of membership benefits.





Registration is now open for the PASA/PSBA conference on October 15-17 at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions. Dynamic keynote speakers, dozens of education sessions, networking opportunities, exhibit hall, student performances -- it's all here! Registration includes attendance at the PA Public Education Foundation Awards and Student Showcase. The conference kicks off on Sunday, October 15 at 7:00 p.m. You won't want to miss it.

Cost for PASA members is \$499 for the full conference and \$300 for either Monday or Tuesday.

[PASA Members: Register today by emailing conference.info@psba.org](mailto:conference.info@psba.org)  
[Learn more about the Keynotes](#) | [Conference Schedule](#) | [Lodging](#)

### Transportation available for Western PA Members:

PSBA is providing complimentary transportation to and from Kalahari Resorts & Conventions to help make traveling to the conference easy for PSBA and PASA members in Western PA. Franklin Regional and Grove City Area school districts will be the two locations available for pickup and drop-off. Personal vehicles can be parked at the district for the duration of the conference, in a well-lit and secured parking lot. Additional details on timing will be available soon. Space is limited to 50 people per location, so don't wait to reserve your bus seat. Reservations are included in the conference registration process on myPSBA.org.

### Meet the Keynote Speakers:



**Dr. Christine Porath**  
*Mastering Civility*



**Gregory Offner**  
*Employee Engagement & Retention*



# Professional Development

## *What's Your Motivation?*



**By Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski**  
Retired Superintendent



**A**s a superintendent or a central office administrator, one of the key skills necessary for making progress is the ability to motivate people. Motivation is crucial for an organization to be able to embrace change, to overcome obstacles, to attain goals, and to move forward.

In order to inspire others through this path, superintendents must have intrinsic motivation themselves. In stressful, high-impact positions, motivation can help to maintain a high level of effectiveness, energy, and enthusiasm.

So, what's your motivation?

In Daniel Pink's book "Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us," he identifies three main sources of true intrinsic motivation:

Autonomy is a self-directed behavior where one has a choice over what they do, when they do it, and how they do it.

Mastery is becoming better and better at something until our abilities match our challenges.

Purpose is working in a meaningful way toward a larger cause and greater good.

I propose that for most superintendents and central office administrators, all three come into play but that the greatest

**To view upcoming professional learning opportunities, visit [PASA's website](#) or check out our calendar of events on Page 20.**

source of motivation is purpose.

We can find daily motivation and renew our sense of purpose in small things around the district — literally, the "smallest of things."

Visiting the kindergarten and first-grade classrooms has given me the biggest boost on any given day. Any superintendent or central office administrator can list those small things that bring a sense of joy and reignite that daily motivation. Our schools are full of them.

But for long-term motivation and stamina to keep moving forward, I firmly believe in the age-old theory that professional growth and success are a product of a cycle of "challenge and support."

The challenge portion comes from those transition situations that stretch one's current skills to the next level, while the support portion provides what is necessary to accomplish a task or to move an initiative forward.

In the role of superintendent or central office administrator, one doesn't need to search out challenging opportunities.





# New Superintendents' Academy

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) encourages new superintendents to attend the high-value, three-part New Superintendents' Academy that will provide you with an in-depth overview about your new role.

Sessions vary in theme and are led by experienced Pennsylvania superintendents and education experts who offer information and practical advice regarding the complicated issues and challenges unique to your new leadership role.

This series is aimed at enhancing your leadership skills and capacities in the key areas of Strategic and Cultural Leadership, Systems Leadership, and Professional and Community Leadership.

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

## Academy Schedule:

Introduction to the Superintendency – July 26: The First 100 Days

Part 1 – September 27-28: Strategic & Cultural Leadership

Part 2 – November 16-17: Systems Leadership

Part 3 – January 11-12: Professional & Community Leadership

## Questions?

Contact Director for Professional Development, Dr. Michele Balliet at [mballiet@pasa-net.org](mailto:mballiet@pasa-net.org) or via phone at 717-540-4448.

### REGISTRATION:

#### Complete Series:

\$800 for PASA members

\$950 for nonmembers

#### Two-day Program:

\$280 for PASA members

\$330 for nonmembers

They present themselves every day and we grow from them every day. But what is the support portion of the cycle?

Without the support portion, our cycle is broken and the situation can spiral. In our job descriptions, superintendents offer and provide support for all staff, faculty, and administrators in the district, but they also need to have support in order to sustain ongoing intrinsic motivation.

We need support systems in place for ourselves to help maintain motivation — not only to be better servant leaders but also because motivation is important for personal well-being.

Where can we get support? Traditionally, support is discussed in terms of providing tools, resources, and finances, but for someone in the role of a superintendent, the most important form of support is that which we find in personal connections and interactions.

Our superintendent and other executive colleagues can provide a friendly ear, advice, and a great sounding board. Connections with family and friends give us time for a personal refresh and grounding in realities. Formal or informal mentor relationships allow for opportunities for

reflection and analysis.

However, we must remember that we need to find time for all of these connections for the sake of our own self-care. In the interest of our own motivation and for the good of the work of our district, we must recognize the need to keep ourselves fresh and focus on the avenues that we use to motivate, sustain, and reinvigorate ourselves.

After all, we need to put on our own oxygen masks before we can help others with theirs.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"Pink makes a strong, science-based case for rethinking motivation—and then provides the tools you need to transform your life."  
—HENRY C. SZ, MD, coauthor of *You: The Owner's Manual*

Daniel H. Pink

author of *A Whole New Mind*

**DRIVE**

The Surprising Truth  
About What Motivates Us

# A HAPPY and Heartfelt Welcome Back



By Dr. Tina Kane  
Superintendent, Marple Newton



# WELCOME BACK!

**W**elcome back to school! As the hallways of our schools begin to surge with the energy of a new academic year, we are graced with staff members with both familiar and fresh faces.

To truly usher in this academic year, we began our teacher in-service week by preparing a special treat for our staff: a video where our students, in their very own words, expressed their joy and expectations for the upcoming year.

The staff found the video heartwarming and enlightening. Listening to the genuine voices and witnessing the affection in our students' eyes served as a powerful reminder of the noble calling we have chosen.

The unfiltered expressions of gratitude and admiration, from our students, reinforced the profound impact they make each day. It underscored that our influence extends beyond the confines of the classroom, entering the healthy hearts of our students. The smiles, the emotions, and the sheer happiness captured in their testimonials spoke volumes about the indispensable role our beloved educators play in their lives.

In the heart of these expressions lay my wish for the year: H.A.P.P.Y. - Have a Positive and Productive Year.

**H - Hopeful:** Our students are full of aspiration. Let us begin every day filled with hope—hope that we can make a difference, hope that we can light up a young mind, and hope that together, we can shape a brighter tomorrow.

**A - Attitude:** The way we approach our tasks and challenges can significantly impact our outcomes. A

positive attitude can transform obstacles into opportunities and setbacks into stepping stones.

**P - Passionate:** Our students' passion and love for our schools and its educators have been evident. Let us reciprocate with our own passion for teaching, ensuring that every student feels seen, heard, and cherished.

**P - Productive:** Every moment with our students is precious. Let us maximize our time, crafting engaging lessons and fostering environments where our students can thrive.

**Y - Yearning to Learn:** As we witnessed in the video, our students look up to us. Let us be role models of lifelong learning, always curious, always ready to evolve, grow, and share new knowledge.

With the personal testimonies of our students, it was evident that they see our staff as more than simply teachers. They see them as mentors, role models, confidants, and sometimes even their heroes.

Keep in mind that each student in our care comes to us with dreams, aspirations, and hopes, so let us express our commitment to them by ensuring that this year every classroom is a H.A.P.P.Y one.

So, let's stay H.A.P.P.Y! Let us ensure that we, and our students, have a truly Positive and Productive Year. Let's infuse our classrooms with positivity, our discussions with enthusiasm, and our endeavors with purpose. Here's to a H.A.P.P.Y year ahead!



# Assistant Superintendents and Supervisors Summit

*Ignite Passion with the 7 Mindsets: A Workshop for Educational Leaders*

**Friday, October 20, 2023 | 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. | Harrisburg PaTTAN**

Ignite positive mindsets in our schools! Improve your personal mindset as an educational leader and build upon your professional strategies to support the well-being of your staff members and students! This one-day workshop will empower central office leaders to build a winning culture in our schools!

The \*7 Mindsets Workshop\* isn't just a seminar—it's a revolution in perspective. Delve into the core Mindsets that fuel both personal and professional success. Collaborate with peers, sharing strategies to weave these insights into your schools, crafting environments where educators and students don't just learn but thrive. Beyond just learning, connect with like-minded leaders eager to redefine the future of education. This is your chance to rediscover purpose, strengthen your leadership, and inspire positive change in your institutions.

Join your fellow assistant superintendents and central office leaders from across Pennsylvania for a day of learning and networking! Register today and each registrant will receive a copy of The 7 Mindsets book!

## Featured Speakers:



### Jeff Waller

*Co-author of The 7 Mindsets to Live Your Ultimate Life: An Unexpected Blueprint for an Extraordinary Life*

Jeff is a thought leader in social and emotional learning, personal achievement, and youth empowerment. He is the co-author of The 7 Mindsets to Live Your Ultimate Life. He is also the co-author of Ridiculously Amazing Schools, Creating a Culture where Everyone Thrives. He is the co-founder of 7 Mindsets Corporation, a prominent social and emotional learning solution provider currently serving 2 million students in all 47 states.



### Chelsea Buchanan

*Director of Partner Solutions, 7 Mindsets*

Chelsea is the Director of Partner Solutions and supports the sales, marketing, product, and services teams at 7 Mindsets. As a passionate team leader and lifelong educator, Chelsea believes that social-emotional learning is the foundation for building meaningful and lasting relationships with your students and colleagues. In her tenure with 7 Mindsets, Chelsea developed and authored the first 7 Mindsets elementary curriculum. She has presented over 2500 hours of 7 Mindsets P.D. and has experience working with urban, rural, and suburban districts nationwide and globally. She has implemented 7 Mindsets to students and staff as an educator prior to working with the 7 Mindsets team.

**Plus a panel of PA Education Leaders will share their experiences in implementing 7Mindsets in their schools.**

## How to register:

[Click here to register online at PASA's website.](#)

(Book included in costs)

## Investment:

PASA Member: \$109 | Non-Member: \$149

As a PASA member, bring other members of your district team (members or non-members) at a cost of \$79 for each additional team member!

## Questions:

Contact PASA's Professional Development Administrative Assistant, Aubrey Kyler at 717-540-4448 or via email at [akyler@pasa-net.org](mailto:akyler@pasa-net.org).



# State News:

## **PA Public Schools Underfunded By \$6.2 Billion, Study Finds**

Pennsylvania needs to increase its investment in public schools by \$6.2 billion to help students meet graduation rate goals and proficiency on state exams, according to a school finance expert. Penn State assistant professor Matthew Kelly told a panel of policymakers the figure was his conservative estimate of what was needed to address chronic underfunding that led to a landmark court ruling earlier this year.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“PA Public Schools Underfunded By \\$6.2 Billion, Study Finds”](#) (from, Pennlive, 9/12/23)

## **Six takeaways From The First Week Of Hearings To Change PA’s School Funding System**

Pennsylvania lawmakers kicked off their hearings this week on how to change the state’s unconstitutional school funding system, and the scope of the challenge was on display: both in terms of dollars and how to distribute them, and the urgency of the needs facing schools. Along with testimony that Pennsylvania schools are underfunded by \$6.2 billion, superintendents and policy experts noted ways in which even that figure fell short, particularly in poor districts bearing the brunt of the funding problem. Meanwhile, lawmakers questioned how the state would foot the bill.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“Six Takeaways From The First Week Of Hearings To Change PA’s School Funding System”](#) (from, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 9/14/23)

## **School Funding Overhaul Is A Chance To Fix Old Flaws In An Inequitable System, Advocates Say**

Pennsylvania students with disabilities will now be able to attend school until age 22, officials announced Tuesday — a change forced by a lawsuit filed on behalf of a Lower Merion student. Federal law obligates public schools to educate students with disabilities until they earn a regular diploma or turn 22, but Pennsylvania had been forcing students to graduate at the end of the school year they turn 21. In July, lawyers working on behalf of a Lower Merion student with multiple disabilities, identified only as A.P. in legal documents, asked a federal judge to step in to stop the practice, and to grant class-action status.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“School Funding Overhaul Is A Chance To Fix Old Flaws In An Inequitable System, Advocates Say”](#) (from, Pennsylvania Capital-Star, 9/7/23)



## **PA Is Changing Its Special-Ed Rules: Students With Disabilities Can Now Attend School Until Age 22**

Pennsylvania students with disabilities will now be able to attend school until age 22, officials announced Tuesday — a change forced by a lawsuit filed on behalf of a Lower Merion student. Federal law obligates public schools to educate students with disabilities until they earn a regular diploma or turn 22, but Pennsylvania had been forcing students to graduate at the end of the school year they turn 21. In July, lawyers working on behalf of a Lower Merion student with multiple disabilities, identified only as A.P. in legal documents, asked a federal judge to step in to stop the practice, and to grant class-action status.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“PA Is Changing Its Special-Ed Rules: Students With Disabilities Can Now Attend School Until Age 22”](#) (from, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 8/31/23)

## **Free Breakfast For All In PA Public Schools Makes Stigma Disappear**

Pennsylvania’s universal free breakfast program isn’t new: During the COVID-19 emergency, the federal government authorized schools to make free breakfast available to everyone, regardless of financial need. The federal program has ended. But Pennsylvania has made it permanent, including universal free breakfast as part of the recently approved state budget. Beyond offering a convenient, nutritious breakfast to all, schools are witnessing another transforming impact: Students are less likely to pass up a free breakfast because of any stigma associated with needing a free meal.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“Free Breakfast For All In PA Public Schools Makes Stigma Disappear”](#) (from, Pennlive, 8/28/23)

# National News:



## **Bill Would Ensure Parents Know of Right to Invite Experts to Special Ed Meetings**

Schools would be required to notify parents of students with disabilities that they can invite people with additional knowledge or expertise to participate in individualized education program meetings under the proposed Think Differently about Education Act. These IEP members invited by parents can include people who know the child or who have special expertise about that child's special education services.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“Bill Would Ensure Parents Know of Right to Invite Experts to Special Ed Meetings”](#)  
(from K-12Dive, 9/15/23)

## **More School Employees May Qualify For Overtime Under Labor Department Proposal**

The Biden administration is seeking to qualify 3.6 million low-paid salaried workers for higher wages, according to a proposal published in the federal register last week. The change would potentially qualify many school district employees for overtime pay and impact how districts configure their budgets. The U.S. Department of Labor's current regulations make teachers and administrators exempt from qualifying for overtime pay. The proposal does not make any changes to that, meaning teachers and administrators will continue to be ineligible for overtime.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“More School Employees May Qualify For Overtime Under Labor Department Proposal”](#)  
(from, K-12Dive, 9/15/23)

## **Final Title IX Rules Likely To Be Pushed Beyond October**

The U.S. Department of Education probably won't meet its own October deadline for releasing the two final Title IX regulations that schools and colleges are anxiously awaiting, policy experts and practitioners say. The likely delay is a blow to the Biden administration, which has made a rework to federal sexual misconduct and gender identity policies a signature initiative. Schools and colleges are also in an awkward position of adhering to an existing Trump-era Title IX regulation, while still needing to prepare for a completely new slate of rules.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“Final Title IX Rules Likely To Be Pushed Beyond October”](#) (from K-12Dive 8/28/23)

## **Researchers Used AI To Rezone School Districts. Here's What They Found**

Efforts to desegregate schools through rezoning often spark a backlash among parents citing concerns over school crowding and commute times. But ill-fitting attendance boundaries (and the formulas used to make them) may make districts less efficient as well as less equitable, and new research suggests education leaders can better integrate schools without lengthening the amount of time students spend on the bus.

**Read the rest of the story:** [“Researchers Used AI To Rezone School Districts. Here's What They Found”](#) (from EducationWeek, 9/7/23)



# PLUS Caucus of PASA

*Art Imitates Life... In All The Best Ways*



By Dr. Christopher Dormer  
PLUS Caucus Chair



In *The Republic*, Plato argues that art is an imitation of objects and events of everyday life “thrice removed” - that is art is a copy of a copy of an ideal. He argues that art is nothing more than lesser imitations of people, places, and things that already exist.

American artist Robert Rauschenberg believed there was a gap between art and life and the artist wants to show the possibilities that lay in between. This summer, we had an art project in Norristown that shows the best of art, the best of life, and the best of our community.

For the past two years, several community organizations and the school district have partnered on the “One Book, One Norristown” initiative. The idea is to select one book that everyone will read that celebrates literacy, literature, and the diversity of our community.

Our local literacy council coordinates the recording of “read alouds” by VIPs in the community of each chapter of the book (I don’t know if I qualify as a VIP, but I happily have lent my voice). Other groups sponsor weekly discussions and many activities for people of all ages. The project culminates with a visit from the author.

This year, OBON commissioned the creation of a mural to accompany this year’s novel, *Shadowshaper* by Daniel Jose



Older, a New York Times best-selling author. OBON hired a local artist, Drew, to design a piece that incorporates us as a district, us as a community, and us as humans.

After searching our entire community for the best location for the mural to be installed, we decided it would be displayed on the exterior walls of one of our schools, right along a major roadway in southeastern PA. The final design Drew shared with us literally brought me to tears.

Over a week in August, we invited members of our community to contribute to the creation of the mural. Drew took his design and scaled it to become a 16-foot by 16-foot piece. He divided the entire work into 16 four-foot by four-foot pieces. Each day, four pieces were





brought to life with all-day painting. We had students, parents, community members, staff members, and even the superintendent adding color to the canvas, bringing art to life. Community members of different races, creeds, colors, and backgrounds all shared a bit of themselves. Not only did each image incorporated into the mural represent real life in our community, but the act of painting and making art represented the lives of the people of our community. Camaraderie.

Joy.  
Talent.  
Laughter.  
Friendship.  
Care.  
Pride.  
Respect.

As you finish reading this “feel good” story, I hope you have some of the same takeaways that I did: This project was a timely reminder of the importance of the arts in our schools.

It also reaffirmed why we need to provide many varied and different opportunities for people to be themselves, feel that they belong, and feel that they have something to contribute.

Art can indeed imitate life and all the possibilities that lie in between.

*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.*



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# Writing Out Loud

*A lesson from the Birds: How to win the day when 'Plan A' isn't working*



**By Adam Kulikowski**  
Director of Communications



**T**he Kulikowski household bleeds Green on Sundays. Like most football aficionados, my wife and I couldn't wait for the NFL season to kick off. As Philadelphia Eagles fans, we're still riding the high of a Super Bowl appearance while in typical Philly-fan form simultaneously lamenting what could have been in that close loss in February.

We were excited to see our MVP candidate QB, Jalen Hurts, and his bevy of stars on offense put on a show. Coming off a season in which we had one of the best scoring teams in the league, we knew points wouldn't be a problem.

Over the first two games of the season, Hurts and his comrades have been anything but the offensive juggernaut they were projected to be.

Yet, after the first two weeks, their record shines with a spotless 2-0 sheen.

Why?

The Eagles have become very good at finding ways to win when they don't have their 'A Game'—or when the initial game plan just doesn't seem to be working out as scripted.

When the Minnesota Vikings (sorry Sherri!), took away the Eagles downfield passing attack, the Birds adjusted. They leaned on the folks they trusted most—their offensive line—and simplified the game plan.

They ran the ball. Nothing flashy. But it was effective. And it saved the day last Thursday night in a 34-28 victory.



It's what good teams do. They adjust their plan. They simplify things. They find a way. They are resourceful when they are not at their best.

It's also what good leaders do.

In our every day lives, how do we win the day when we might not be our best selves—or when the initial game plan just isn't working out? What are our go-to strengths when the full playbook isn't available? How do you simplify things for your district team to get your proverbial running game going again?

Each of us will have different answers—and perhaps different approaches when adversity challenges us based on our own unique personalities. But think about your Plan B—and the skills needed to execute it. How will you adjust in-game to win the day? Knowing what pivots you might need before you need them just might save that day's win.

Go Birds!





**By Ann McMullan**  
Project Director, CoSN



### **White House Cybersecurity Summit for K-12 Schools:**

On Tuesday, August 8, 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration announced new efforts to strengthen Cybersecurity in America's K-12 school systems during an event held at the White House. First Lady Jill Biden was joined by Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas in welcoming school administrators, educators and private sector companies to the event to discuss best practices and new resources available to strengthen cybersecurity throughout our nation's school systems. Keith Krueger, CoSN CEO, and Diane Doersch, CoSN Board Chair, joined the other participants at the White House for this critically important conversation.

During the August 8 White House Cybersecurity Summit several new and continuing federal initiatives were shared that aim to meet the growing challenges involved in assuring that cybersecurity is both a top priority and a successful endeavor for all school districts. To learn more about the current administration initiatives and read an overview of the August 8 White House Cybersecurity Summit for K-12 Schools visit this website:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/07/biden-harris-administration-launches-new-efforts-to-strengthen-americas-k-12-schools-cybersecurity/>

CoSN also has a wide range of resources on leading Cybersecurity Initiatives that are readily accessible at:

<https://www.cosn.org/edtech-topics/cybersecurity/>

### **Roadmap to Innovation: CoSN Driving K-12 Innovation Newsletter**

CoSN's Driving K-12 Innovation project management team is now producing a new free monthly newsletter called the Roadmap to Innovation Newsletter. Subscribers receive the Driving K-12 Innovation Advisory Board's

tips, advice, and resources in order to impact global education changemaking efforts. To sign up for this free CoSN Driving K-12 Innovation monthly publication click the "Subscribe" button found at this link: [Roadmap to Innovation Newsletter Registration](#)

### **CoSN/AASA EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel Series: Season 6 Premier**

The CoSN/AASA EmpowerED Superintendents edLeader Panel Series began its sixth season on September 11, 2023, with a broadcast on "Leading Learning in the 2023-2024 School Year: Challenges and Opportunities". The featured guest panelists included Dr. David R. Schuler, Executive Director, AASA, The School Superintendents Association, Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent of Schools, Princeton Public Schools (NJ) and Chair of CoSN/AASA EmpowerED Superintendents Advisory Panel and Dr. Aaron Spence, Superintendent, Loudoun County Public Schools (VA), and Co-Chair of CoSN/AASA EmpowerED Superintendents Advisory Panel. The series co-hosted by [AASA](#) and [CoSN](#) in partnership with [edWeb.net](#) and is once again graciously sponsored by ClassLink. You are welcome to access the free registration for the recording and/or podcast version of this recent September 11 broadcast – as well as access to previous broadcasts – at <https://home.edweb.net/supers/>. You will also find a link to register for the next live broadcast, "Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI: Empowering a Deeper Conversation", scheduled for Monday, October 9, 2023, at 5 p.m. ET at <https://home.edweb.net/supers/>.

### **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](mailto:membership@cosn.org).





# School District Spending of the American Rescue Plan Report



**By Sasha Pudelski**

Director, Advocacy, AASA, The School Superintendents Association



One of the pillars of AASA's advocacy on behalf of superintendents is its commitment to always represent the views of the organization's members no matter if they're good, bad or ugly on Capitol Hill.

One of the easiest ways for our team to keep advocacy relevant and accurate is through survey work. Several times a year, we take the pulse of AASA members on a specific funding or policy matter of great significance on Capitol Hill. Earlier this summer, we issued the fourth installment of our survey on how districts are spending the greatest one-time federal funding investment in education history, otherwise known as the American Rescue Plan Act funds. In August, we published the School District Spending of American Rescue Plan which details and analyzes the survey responses detailing how school systems across the country are utilizing ARP funds in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



This report detailed the consistency with which districts have prioritized adding instructional time and addressing whole-child needs as well as how superintendents are approaching the fiscal cliff in September 2024. We also hoped to demonstrate that ARP spending plans are not documents written in stone and district leaders are changing their spending decisions based on a variety of factors. Finally, we wanted to ascertain how districts are preparing for the spending cuts that will come in September 2024 and how they view the sustainability of this funding.

Here are some of our key findings from the report released last week:

Since 2021, the top three immediate investments remained the same: increasing instructional time and opportunities and investing in high-quality curriculum materials tied for first with 59% of respondents selecting it. Fifty-eight percent

selected adding specialist staff as a priority while 55% selected investing in teacher planning and professional development.

Since 2021, the long-term priority list for district leaders has focused on expanding whole child supports, services and programs. Other long-term priority investments included renovating and rebuilding school facilities and engaging high school students. More than half of school district leaders are shifting their American Rescue Plan spending decisions due to higher-than-expected costs and inflation.

Educator feedback and the need to further direct resources toward the social and emotional needs of students were cited by nearly half of district leaders as the source for realigning spending priorities and decisions.

Nearly 40% of district leaders said feedback from parents led them to make changes to their ARP spending plans, while 29% said assessments of student performance, including test scores as well as delays in procuring materials and supplies, led to shifts in district ARP spending.

Eighty-six percent of district leaders said sustainability was a top priority or they strongly considered sustainability when determining ARP expenditures.

Fifty-three percent of district leaders indicated they would be forced to decrease staffing for specialist staff, such as behavioral health personnel, tutors and reading specialists, before the 2024-25 school year. Fifty-one percent indicated they would cut summer-learning programming.

A third of superintendents surveyed believe that all students will be impacted equally in their communities by the discontinuation of ARP-funded instructional programs and supports in the 2024-25 school year, while a little more than a quarter said that students who are struggling academically will be impacted the most.

A fifth of respondents highlighted how economically disadvantaged students will be the most impacted by the cuts in programming and staffing, while 14% said students with mental health needs will experience these funding cuts more acutely.

David R. Schuler, AASA executive director, had this to say about the survey findings: "We hope this report demonstrates how critical American Rescue Plan funds are and that district leaders are laser-focused in adding instructional time.

Superintendents know best how to maximize the academic impact of the funding and are spending these resources wisely.

However, there will be serious repercussions for students when these funds run out, which is why proposals to slash funding for the 2024-25 school year are simply unacceptable and risk deeply undermining the progress students are making academically."

## In the September Issue of School Administrator Magazine:

This month's issue examines the new realities about landing, transition into and hiring for a superintendency. Articles include: The New Realities of Landing a Superintendency; Extending the Honeymoon; Preparing for Leadership Succession; The 'Care and Feeding' of School Boards and more.



### Quotes:

"Forgetting... is often misunderstood. It doesn't imply erasing memories or disregarding past experiences. Instead, it means not letting those experiences dictate present and future interactions. When we forget, we give people the chance to grow, learn from their mistakes, and demonstrate positive change."

**–William Adams, Assistant Superintendent, Willmar, in "Forgiving, Forgetting, and Moving On: Building A Culture of Trust"**

"The new reality is that with the lightening speed of internet communication and the ability of any stakeholder to blast misinformation, aspiring and current leaders must know how to use social media to create a positive presence, spread good news and counter adverse posts. Boards need a leader to combat and stand above social media tirades and ensure the school district's brands remain positive."

**–Glenn W. McGee, President, Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, in "The New Realities of Landing a Superintendency"**

"For change to be successful, it needs to be grounded in purpose, include participation from all segments of the school community and be vetted by the people who will be most impacted. There simply cannot be any shortcuts even if you are convinced this is what the board is seeking."

**–Steve Joel, Retired Superintendent, Regional Director at McPherson & Jacobson in Omaha, Neb., in "Extending the Honeymoon"**

# PASA Calendar



## September:

September 27-28: New Superintendents' Academy Series (Part 1)

## October:

October 11: Managing the Risks: Professional Ethics and the Educator Discipline Act

October 15-17: PASA/PSBA Fall Conference (Poconos)

October 20: Assistant Superintendents/Supervisors Summit

## November:

November 8: Annual Meeting/Awards of Achievement Reception and Board of Governors Meeting

November 14: Managing the Risks: Complex Student Issues: Avoiding Ethical and Legal Issues

November 16-17: New Superintendents' Academy Series (Part 2)

**November 23-24: PASA office closed in observance of Thanksgiving**

## December:

December 6-7: Second session of PASA's 2024 Cohort of the AASA Superintendent Certification Program

December 13: Assistant Superintendents/Supervisors Summit follow-up Webinar No. 1

December 14: Managing the Risks: Instructional Materials Selection and Red Flags

**December 25: PASA office closed in observance of Christmas holiday**

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