

# 83<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS WASHINGTON, DC 2021



the



Direction for HR Leaders in Education

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# President's Corner From the Desk of Brian White, AASPA President



I am honored and privileged to serve AASPA and its members as President. We just finished our 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, DC. It was a phenomenal experience, as well as our 2<sup>nd</sup> largest conference ever. It was an extra special experience personally to become the President in DC! We had the opportunity to reconnect with others in person, learn from others' expertise, share in engaging learning and networking experiences and have some fun. I'm also excited to say that we reached an all time membership high at the conference! Our AASPA staff has done an amazing job during this last year to deliver top-notch professional development, outstanding networking experiences and provide exceptional services and benefits to meet member needs.

My journey with AASPA began by serving as a Membership Committee member and I have never regretted my involvement. I now challenge you get involved in your national association. Consider joining a committee, write a blog or article and/or submit to present at a conference. I found that through these experiences I learned so much, grew professionally and expanded the network of experts that I could call on for advice and feedback. This eventually led me to serving on the Executive Board. I'd like to welcome Dr. Dale Fisher as President-Elect, Dr. Steve Grubb as Region 1 Representative and Dr. Monica Schroeder as Region 2 Representative to the Executive Board. With the rest of the Board I look forward to serving AASPA with the great experience and leadership they bring to our organization.

The theme for this year's conference was "Road to Recovery." On any journey you need to understand where you are heading in order to get there. You need to start moving in a direction that will lead you on your journey. You need to stop periodically and check your progress to ensure you are still on the right path. This is something we need to do for our school districts in human capital management as a strategic HR leader. Help set the direction, support the journey, evaluate at checkpoints along the way, adjust as necessary and lead the journey to the destination! Finally, let AASPA and the HCLE standards be your GPS to help guide you along the way.

Thank you for supporting me in this journey and allowing me to serve such a great organization. I look forward to celebrating another successful year in AASPA and seeing you in Orlando, FL, for the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, October 10-13, 2022. We'll check in along the way to make sure we all are empowered to reach that destination!

[Click Here to start your own journey and get involved today!](#)

Regards,

Brian White  
AASPA President

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# GUMBO & GRATITUDE: A RECIPE

by Dr. Karen Peace, Executive Director;  
Caddo Parish Schools; Shreveport, LA

With cooler weather and falling leaves, it's the season to focus more attention on gumbo and gratitude! Although there are many different recipes for gumbo, they all have the same basic ingredients. Gumbo consists primarily of a roux, the Creole trinity - celery, bell peppers and onions, a strongly-flavored stock and meat or shellfish. Just like a good gumbo, there are a variety of approaches to recruitment and retention, but they all should be guided by some basic tenets.

## First you make a roux...

The roux is the gumbo's foundation that holds it all together! Like a roux, recruitment and retention should be held together with a foundation of long-term and short-term goals that are in line with the district strategic plan and initiatives. To develop long-term and short-term recruitment and retention goals, reflect on data related to forecasting the need for teachers and analyze the pipeline sources for recruiting teachers. Some data points might include previous years' hiring/vacancy data (3 to 5 years), the number of teachers eligible to retire by subject/school, historical retention data, number of graduates by pipeline program by subject and historical retention of student teachers. Using data points like those listed can assist with establishing long-term and short-term goals that will drive the work of recruitment and retention.



## Next you add the vegetables and stock

Adding "the trinity" of vegetables and flavorful stock, give the gumbo its delectable taste! To give recruitment and retention an appealing flavor, a schedule of activities should be organized while human capital structures and systems are refined to enhance candidates' experiences. Using the historical supply and demand data used to establish the goals, it's time to organize a schedule for recruitment. The schedule will focus on the "trinity" of components - building and expanding the quantity and quality of the applicant pool, keeping the best candidates interested and selecting the best candidate for a particular vacancy. To further enhance the recruitment process, it is important to establish systems and structures to make sure the candidate experience gives a positive perception of the district. Understanding the candidate's needs at each step of the recruitment/selection process will improve the chances of hiring and retaining high quality teachers.

# FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

## Add the meat

Adding meat to the gumbo makes it filling and enjoyable. The "meat" of recruitment and retention is the development of a plan with specific action steps to build a high-quality workforce. When determining action steps, here are a few questions to consider:

- In what ways do you interact with traditional and alternative providers and recruit from multiple pathways?
- Are you using community resources to support your recruitment and retention efforts?
- Do your action steps include activities that appeal to your ideal candidate/employee?

The focus on selecting meaningful and impactful recruitment and retention activities will significantly impact the ability to attract and retain teachers who can positively impact student growth.

## Taste, serve and show gratitude

At this point, taste the gumbo and add more seasonings - salt, pepper, garlic - until the perfect flavor to serve over rice is reached. Many say it tastes even better the next day and friends are always grateful to have enjoyed a bowl! The goals and action steps that have been put together should be reviewed and revised so that they are "just right" when they are served. As the plan is implemented within the organization, emphasize the district's gratitude for its current and future employees. As the gumbo of goals, processes and action steps are fulfilled, gratitude will be abundant!



Dr. Karen Peace is the Teacher Recruiter for the Caddo Parish School Board. She began her career with Caddo in 1990 teaching Kindergarten and 2nd grade at Newton Smith Elementary and Shreve Island Elementary. In 1998, she became Instructional Coordinator and then in 2003, Principal, both positions at Shreve Island Elementary School. In 2006, Dr. Peace moved to the Caddo Parish School Board office becoming Elementary English Language Arts Supervisor and then Elementary Area Director of School Performance. She has served as an adjunct professor for Centenary College and LSU-Shreveport. Karen and her husband, Brad, reside in Shreveport where they are active members in First United Methodist Church. They enjoy traveling, spending time with family and friends and cheering on the LSU Tigers.

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### Upcoming AASPA Events

**HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**  
December 2-3, 2021 | Phoenix, AZ



**PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR BOOT CAMP**  
January 27-28, 2022 | New Orleans, LA



**NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE SUMMIT**  
February 7-8, 2022 | Orlando, FL



**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION SUMMIT**  
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# A HUMAN-CENTERED RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESS

by Emily Douglas-McNab, Co-founder and Chief & Taylor Tamang, Strategic HR Partner; Experience Management Institute; Columbus, OH

Everywhere we turn, we are confronted with data that proves that the COVID-19 pandemic was an incredibly disruptive and traumatic event. With its negative effects on students, communities, employees and work, the pandemic ushered in a new age. We acted in bold ways to support each other. We got creative to maintain our productivity while considering the mental health of our employees. We embraced technology in new and wonderful ways. *We put people first.*

It's time to ask yourselves, as organizational leaders, whether you will continue down this path of human-centered, innovative change or revert to old ways.

As a result of the ongoing pandemic, employees are leaving their current organizations at higher rates than ever before. Media has sensationalized "The Great Resignation." Our focus should be on finding a way to become the organizations that people are moving to. Ultimately, we must improve processes for the people we serve. One process that is critical at a time like this is the recruitment and hiring process. It can, and should, be made more human-centered.

When thinking through the hiring process broadly, there are a few places that can be simplified for the user or the applicant. We start by requiring individuals to scour our websites from the home screen to find open positions. Then, when they locate the posted jobs, we require applicants to know and understand the difference between certified and classified positions. The truth is, there are many HR professionals that don't even understand that. Why can't we just classify jobs by role?

When prospective candidates start the application process, we ask them for information we're interested in and we don't use it. We ask them to do things that don't make sense for the position they're applying for, like requiring three references for an entry-level

position. We ask them to provide full pay histories, which is now illegal in many states/localities. We may even ask them to upload transcripts for positions that don't require degrees. Could this be because job applications are tailored to streamlining processes for HR professionals and not for real, human applicants? After we get their application — we ghost people. They never hear a word from us. And, when we get emails outside the system asking for a status update, we don't understand why they're reaching out.

On job postings, we don't share pay ranges. We wait until we have invested time in the applicant and offer them pay that they don't accept. Then, because we are invested, we try to make accommodations for them. If we don't, we've wasted both our time and the time of the candidate. In the end, we turn our compensation structure upside down causing ripples of inequity. At what point do we decide we need a complete overhaul of our processes? Where do we even start?

## Create a Strong Brand

Get an idea of what separates your district from others. Why do people want to work with you instead of other districts? Be sure to advertise the reasons that you are the employer of choice widely across your website, your social media channels and your job postings.

## Make Your "User" the Center of Your Design

Act as an applicant and take a trip through your own website, to the application portal and through the application. Take note of what applicants experience and opportunities for improvement. How long does it take for applicants to complete the entire application? Are we asking them for more information that we need? Be sure to consider the human on the other side of your process.

## Be Transparent About Pay

Applicants don't want to waste time applying for positions that are not completely clear about pay



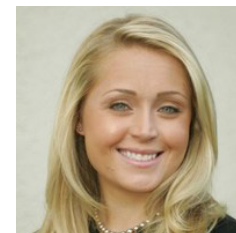
and benefits. It does not hurt to add a section to your job postings that explain to applicants how their pay is determined, what their pay will be or even link to your salary schedule.

## Follow Up

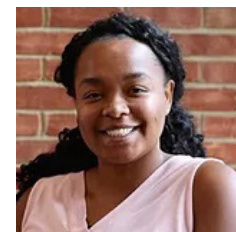
After applicants submit their applications, it may be worthwhile to have an automatic message that tells applicants that their application has been received and the time frame for a response. It keeps applicants engaged in the process and saves us the obligation to reach out individually to every applicant. It also gives us the opportunity to thank them for giving us their time and applying for our positions. After all, recruitment does not end with the application!

While these steps are just a start, they show to applicants that you value the time they've taken to research, apply, and engage with your organization. It ensures that you are allowing equitable access and that you value equity in your organization. It helps attract employees with values that align with yours and may even set you apart from competitors.

Now more than ever, it is critical to continue to transform our minds and actions to deliver the best possible outcomes for all students and stakeholders. In order to do this, we must focus on building human-centered processes into our organizations to ensure that we attract and retain the best talent. Let's put people first again.



Emily, Co-founder and Chief of Experience Management Institute, has more than 20 years of experience working with districts, higher education, nonprofits, and more on topics related to strategy, people management, organizational development, and the future of work. You can follow Emily on Twitter @Emily\_EXMI, IG @EmilyDouglas or contact her at EmilyDM@exmi.org.



Taylor, a Strategic HR Partner at Experience Management Institute, recently joined the team with the goal of fulfilling her dream of making a difference while using her human resources expertise to support nonprofits, educational institutions, and government entities. You can connect with Taylor on Twitter @Taylor\_EXMI or contact her at TaylorT@exmi.org.

# STUDENT TEACHING: TRIALS & OPPORTUNITIES

by Kate Walsh, President & Hannah Putman, Managing Director, Research; National Council on Teacher Quality; Washington, DC

Sourcing new teachers through a residency program holds a lot of appeal for many school districts, but the price tag - an average cost of \$52,000 to deliver one resident to a classroom - is not inconsequential. Still, the model continues to expand across the country, enjoying broad support of districts, as well as significant subsidies from philanthropy and the federal government. For many, the access to well prepared teachers makes the high cost all worthwhile.

It's hard not to notice the contrast between these generous investments in residencies with the minimal funding directed at student teaching, even though this has traditionally been the more abundant source of new teachers. Residencies may flourish while the poor relation, student teaching partnerships, barely survive on fumes.

What makes their juxtaposition particularly mystifying is how much they share in common. Except for the money involved, there are few significant differences between residencies and student teaching. It's only that one tends to be done well - the outcome of the attention to quality control - and the other not so much, more of a roll of the dice in terms of the quality of outcome.

Yet student teaching is an important institution deserving of the time, attention and consideration of investment that are needed to prepare a new teacher for the classroom. And the research findings on student teaching, actually far more robust and promising than anything that's come out on residencies to date, merit the full attention of both districts and educator preparation programs alike.

Here we organize this expanding body of research, much of it recent, suggesting how districts might take six steps regarding their student teaching partnerships and inspiring full confidence that each will result in a hiring pool of new teachers fully prepared for the classroom. While none of these studies examined the

impact of various compensation strategies directed at either the student teacher or the mentor teacher, districts would do well to take a page from residencies' playbook. To recruit the strongest teachers and indeed entice the best student teachers to a district is likely to require more investment by school districts than is typically offered.

## Six steps to use student teachers to solve staffing challenges

**1.** Pair student teachers up with the strongest current teachers. While it may be tempting to pair a struggling teacher with a student teacher, think again. A large amount of recent research has demonstrated that student teachers who are paired with a more effective cooperating teacher are more effective in their first year of teaching. One study found that the difference in outcomes for a student whose teacher trained under a highly effective cooperating teacher versus an average one is equivalent to the difference in outcomes for a student taught by a third-year teacher versus a brand new one. Another study found that student teachers having effective cooperating teachers was associated with a six-month head start in terms of teacher effectiveness.

**2.** Use easy, low-cost strategies to recruit strong cooperating teachers. An analysis of teachers in Washington state found that only a small portion of available effective and highly effective teachers are tapped to be cooperating teachers.

Similarly, in an experimental study in Tennessee, researchers gave the university supervisor of student teaching at one institution an ordered list of the best available teachers in the region, based on their instructional performance (measured by value-added and observation ratings), years of experience and placement information (i.e., grades and subjects taught). In comparison to business as usual, the

recruited cooperating teachers were much more effective and student teachers reported feeling better prepared to teach. No additional incentives were offered and no outside researcher was needed; school districts themselves can create these lists and provide them to local preparation programs.

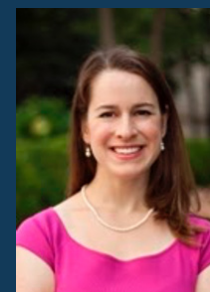
Perhaps even more exciting, another study found that while hosting a student teacher had no impact on student achievement during the host year, that cooperating teacher's students showed greater achievement gains in the following years.

**3.** Host student teachers in the areas that will help meet staffing challenges. While new teachers are likely to take their first job near their home, they're ten times more likely to take a first job near where they student taught. If a school or district anticipates needing to hire teachers next year, they should make sure to host student teachers this year.

Hosting student teachers with an eye to hiring them may stave off potential teacher shortages. Districts that host more student teachers have fewer teachers with emergency credentials, in a study of Washington state school districts. This relationship held up even after controlling for geography, demographics and the distance to the local teacher prep programs, meaning that two similarly rural districts saw different rates of emergency-credentialed teachers depending on how many student teachers they hosted. Essentially, while hosting student teachers does take some work for the district, it offers a huge potential upside to securing qualified teachers.



Kate Walsh has served as the president of the National Council on Teacher Quality since 2003. Driven by the belief that relevant, broadly-accessible, comparative data can transform teacher quality, Walsh has spearheaded efforts to instill greater transparency and higher standards among those institutions that exert influence and authority over teachers: states, districts, and teacher preparation programs. Notably, she produced the first-ever report card on the quality of the nation's teacher preparation programs. A relentless advocate for equitable access to great teachers, Walsh's work has been widely featured in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *NPR* and *PBS NewsHour*, among others.



Hannah comes to NCTQ following four years conducting education research with Westat, a social science research company. Her projects included work on informal science education and teacher incentive programs. Prior to Westat, Hannah taught seventh and ninth grade English for three years in the Bronx, New York, as a Teach For America corps member. Hannah holds BA's in English and Government and Politics from the University of Maryland, an MS in Teaching from Pace University and an MPP from the George Washington University with a focus on education policy and evaluation.

**4.** Use aligned student teaching experiences to amp up effectiveness. Bringing student teachers into the subjects, grades and schools where districts anticipate upcoming openings offers more than just a means to fill vacancies. The more closely aligned a student teacher's experience is with her first job, the more effective she will be from day one. Not surprisingly, teachers whose student teaching placement was in the same grade as their first year of teaching assignment tend to be more effective as well.

**5.** Pay close attention to the socioeconomic factors of the schools and classrooms in which student teachers are placed. Aspiring teachers tend to student teach in classrooms that are more affluent than the classrooms in which they're first hired—a mismatch that is especially harmful to teacher effectiveness. One study found when teachers had a larger difference between the percentage of low-income students from their student teaching experience to their first job, their students experienced lower math and ELA scores.

**6.** Look for effective student teachers, since they're more likely to be effective new teachers. Even though student teachers are still learning and developing their craft, a study out of Germany found that a student teacher's performance was the most predictive of later classroom effectiveness. To identify these promising teachers, districts should make sure student teachers get evaluated on their schools' standards.

# SACRED SUBSTITUTES: UNLOCKING THE SECRET TO INCREASE YOUR FILL RATES

## AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH AMIE CORREA

by Dr. Sarah Burnett, Employee and Labor Relations Coordinator & Angelica Romano, Executive Director of Human Resources; West Chicago School District; West Chicago, IL

“Treat your subs like gold” says Amie Correa, Assistant Principal and substitute guru at Lemman Middle School in West Chicago Elementary School District 33. When Amie initially began overseeing substitutes at Lemman Middle School in 2015, there were only a select few substitutes who preferred to sub at Lemman. In a school of approximately 150 staff members and 1,400 middle school students, finding substitutes to fill absences was a large undertaking. Even during COVID-19 times, substitutes flock to Lemman Middle School and it has developed a reputation of being a preferred building for substitutes to work in. In an exclusive interview with Amie, she shares her secrets to substitute success.

### Cultivate a Welcoming Atmosphere

Amie’s first priority for enhancing the substitute process in her building was to establish a welcoming atmosphere. She set up a treat bar with coffee and treats and eventually progressed to creating individual goody bags to show her appreciation for the substitutes at Lemman. For long term substitutes, shadow days are scheduled so that each long term substitute can become familiar with the students, resources and begin to build relationships with the professional learning team. Amie also invites long term and building substitutes to institute days to ensure that they feel included and grow their professional knowledge.

Amie worked hard for two years to establish a universal appreciation for substitutes at Lemman Middle School. An evident positive shift in mindset has been noticed in the staff. “They have an increased appreciation for our substitute teachers and no longer see them as a temporary fix. Many times subs go into buildings feeling inferior, but we need to make them feel important and empowered.” said Amie. Even the students at Lemman treat substitutes as guests. Amie connects with her students by speaking of the Mexican culture in which guests are welcomed into homes and relates this concept to substitute teachers as building guests. In addition, teachers are highly encouraged to implement whole class and individual student rewards for behavior when a substitute is there.



### High Levels of Support

In addition to a welcoming atmosphere, Amie has found prioritizing support for substitutes to be highly effective. Each morning she sends out communication about substitutes who are in the building and sets the expectation that they are guests in the building and should be treated accordingly. The technology team then immediately gets substitutes set up with their needs and teachers in close proximity to a substitute covered classroom check in on substitutes throughout the day. Building student supervisors also provide support by checking in with substitutes in their designated building areas each period of the day. A simple thumbs up from the substitute is given to indicate they are doing well. Amie feels that relationships are important to cultivate with substitutes and provides her personal cell phone number so that they have an immediate contact and feel valued and supported.

### Frame the Work

Aside from the importance of support and appreciation, a solid process within Lemman Middle School is a large factor in the successful substitute turnaround throughout the past 5 years. Amie references Mark Vanclay as she describes how she framed the work for a highly effective substitute process. Amie has created a master spreadsheet with feedback from staff members, that contains all of the filled and unfilled absences each day. Each evening before bed Amie updates absences and each morning the building secretary updates the spreadsheet as well to ensure that all absences are accounted for. Staff members proactively sign up to internally substitute and

appreciate having the advanced notice to plan their day. Jessica Phillips, Lemman Social Worker said, “I love having the sub doc in the evening before a room needs coverage. The advanced notice allows me to see the open spots and choose where I would like to provide support. I tend to choose classes where children I already work with are assigned so that I can see them and how they function in their regular classes. Subbing is also a great way for me to meet general education students who I might not normally see. This is great for building relationships and getting to know many kids across my grade level. It’s one more way for us to connect with students so they have one more trusting adult they can turn to if they need support.” All certified staff in the building sign up for class periods of their choosing to internally substitute for and the building secretary maintains a count of each person’s running total of internal substituting periods. Any unfilled absences are then filled in with one of three building substitutes provided by the district.

Amie believes in transparency and communication, therefore staff are highly encouraged to enter their absences as soon as they are able, and all certified staff are aware that if there is an imminent need for internal coverage, the staff member with the lowest running total will be asked to internally cover it. The opportunity for teachers to choose the periods that they internally cover is helpful to minimize unfilled absences. Additionally, Amie created a common building substitute plan format and links each teacher’s plans to the class period(s) that the teacher will be absent. Each morning Amie has an automated email that is disseminated to all staff in the building for additional opportunities to internally substitute, and the Lemman staff speak very highly of the process. “The substitute process has been simplified and streamlined to make the experience smoother for all involved. Teachers can proactively look to see whose room they can cover and everything seems so much less rushed and scattered” says Karen Rummel, 8th grade teacher.

### High Level Impact

Since Amie has poured her heart and soul into the substitute process at Lemman Middle School, her fill rates have exponentially increased. Since October 2019, Lemman Middle School’s overall fill rate has increased by 17% and since October 2020, the fill rate has increased by an impressive 34%. In relation, since October 2019, the number of total staff absences has decreased by 102 total absences. According to the Illinois State Report Card, the number of teachers in West Chicago Elementary School District 33 with less than ten absences has increased from 69 teachers in 2018 to 86 in 2020. Not only are staff more present at work, but their absences are also getting filled at increasing rates.

In addition, her staff speaks very highly of the positive building-wide impact of the enhanced substitute process. “Substituting at Leman is something that I really enjoy doing. It provides me with the opportunity to get to know the students, help support them in learning and assist the teachers while they are not present. It is extremely rewarding knowing I can provide consistency for the students” says Kala Crotty, Physical Education Teacher at Leman. Substitute teachers now request Leman Middle due to the welcoming atmosphere, support and seamless process. At the conclusion of the interview, Amie’s final words were, “They are guests in your building and they are capable as long as you have the supports in place to teach it to them.”

### Tips From a Pro

- Treat substitutes like gold; they are not extras, bandaids or an inconvenience.
- Substitutes are guests and here to help us. They should be treated accordingly.
- Establish a point-person for substitutes so that they have someone to go to for answers to questions.
- Put the work and hours in on the front end to frame the process correctly so that at the end of the day, the administration can walk away and the process still operates smoothly.
- Take feedback! Establish a small group of staff members to pilot the process, so that the teacher perspective is included.
- Establish personal connections and make substitutes a priority.
- Allow teachers the opportunity to choose their internal substituting.
- Have a common format for substitute plans to increase familiarity and levels of comfort.

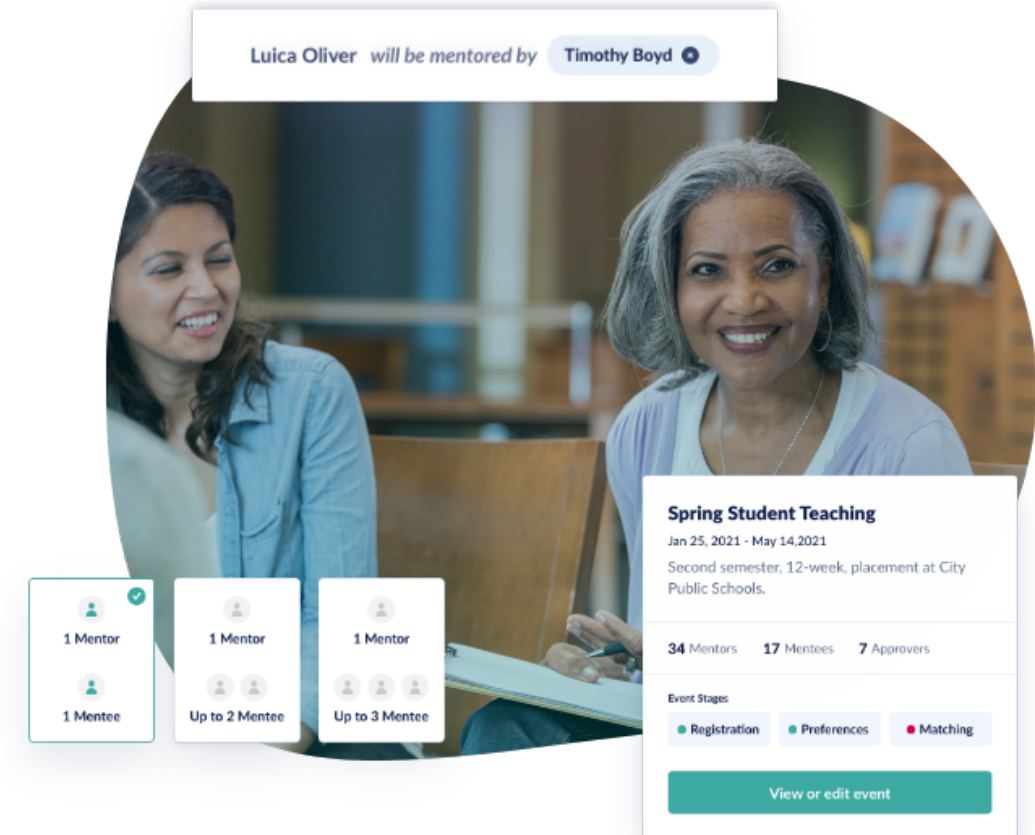


Sarah Burnett is in her ninth year in the field of education and currently serves as the Employee and Labor Relations Coordinator in the Human Resources Department in West Chicago Elementary School District 33. She earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education from Aurora University, a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership and Administration with a Principal Endorsement from Aurora University and a Doctorate of Education with a Superintendent Endorsement, also from Aurora University. Sarah has served on a multitude of building and district level teams focused on areas such as school improvement, data, curriculum writing for monolingual and dual language units, high impact instruction, instructional coaching, social emotional learning, teacher evaluations and building climate and culture.



Angelica Romano has been the Executive Director of Human Resources at West Chicago Elementary School District 33 for the past seven years. Angelica holds a Bachelor’s degree in Finance from Northeastern University, a Master’s degree in Human Resource Management from Keller Graduate School of Management and a Professional Educator License with a Chief School Business Official endorsement from Northern Illinois University. During her tenure as a Member at Large for the Illinois Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, Angelica worked ferociously in creating scholarship opportunities and fundraising for current teachers and soon-to-be teachers, as a contribution to combatting the teacher shortage. In addition, Angelica has attended legislative assemblies through ALAS, which has allowed her to bring the nationwide issue of the teacher shortage to our legislators.

# The Right Mentorship Platform for Educators



- ✓ Save time, simplify logistics
- ✓ Easily manage approval processes
- ✓ Learn about leadership and role aspirations
- ✓ Make better informed matches
- ✓ Encourage staff leadership development
- ✓ Access data in one place for efficient reporting
- ✓ Improve programs with constant, useful data
- ✓ Gain insight into participant preferences and characteristics
- ✓ Cultivate participation in high-needs subject and licensure areas



# CAN THE TEACHER SHORTAGE BE REVERSED?

by Stephen Goodman, National Policy and Communications Coordinator & Dr. Lisa D. Rollins, Director of Outreach and Engagement; PDK International/Educators Rising; Arlington, VA

“My journey with education began when I was a sophomore in high school in my early childhood education class,” says Lilyana De La Rosa, a student at Glendale Community College in Arizona. That year, Lilyana attended a state leadership conference in Arizona and knew in that moment she, “wanted to be a part of something big”. Lilyana was inspired to pursue a career in education, but how do we inspire more students to become educators?

During the 2020-2021 school year, 44 states plus the District of Columbia reported a teacher shortage in one or more of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, sciences, and social studies. The urgent need to recruit educators is evident and has become the center of local, state and national education policy.

Suggestions to address this shortage often pertain to increasing teacher salaries, alleviating some of the obstacles teachers face in the implementation of their job responsibilities and promoting professional development opportunities. While these recommendations can address the problem pertaining to educator retention, the real solution to the teacher shortage starts with promoting the profession and recruiting future educators as early as high school through a “grow your own” program.

“Grow your own” programs involve partnerships between local educator preparation programs and school districts to recruit future educators from within the community. An example of a “grow your own” program is one which uses, “a community-based model in which chapters at schools feed teacher preparation programs at institutes of higher education with support of State Departments of Education and local funders and foundations. When all these entities come together, we can increase teacher diversity and teacher quality.

Implementing a “grow your own” program provides multiple benefits including decreased onboarding

expenses for new hires, increased teacher retention, and diversification of the teacher workforce. On average, it costs \$10,000 to onboard a teacher and up to \$21,000 in urban districts. Coincidentally, around 60% of teachers teach within 20 miles of where they went to school. Therefore, it only makes sense to focus teacher recruitment efforts WITHIN the local community. By beginning the educator preparation journey in high school, future educators are being equipped with skills they can later implement within their own classrooms. According to Podolsky et al., teachers feel more effective in the classroom when they have strong preparation experiences. Additionally, an increase in teacher diversity provides a higher educational benefit for students of color. By partnering a student of color with a teacher of the same color, the student is likely to experience higher learning gains.

To aid local education agencies in the process of implementing a “grow your own” program, look at the Growing the Teaching Profession: A Blueprint to Establishing a Place-Based Grow Your Own Program; hereinafter referred to as the GTP Blueprint. The GTP Blueprint breaks the process of implementation into five stages: exploring, planning, piloting, expanding and evaluating.

During the exploration stage, an advisory committee is formed consisting of school and district administrators, teacher associations/unions, teachers, parents/families and potential funders. These individuals are tasked with overseeing and supporting the implementation of a “grow your own” program. In its first meetings, the committee should explore potential sources of funding, alignment with existing career and technical education (CTE) courses and pathways and opportunities for dual enrollment. Additionally, this committee should review existing teacher recruitment policies for the district to make updated recommendations to the governing board. For example, revising existing policy to guarantee an interview for any applicant who was a member

of the “grow your own” program in high school and returning to teach in the district they graduated from. This approach provides an incentive for program participants to return to teach in their community.

The next stage of the GTP Blueprint involves planning for implementation. During this stage, the aforementioned individuals ensure the necessary budgetary support is lined up, the appropriate staff is hired to lead the program, and students are being informed of the new opportunity. The district should also work with the state to determine student organization requirements along with eligibility for various forms of funding, including Perkins V.

The third stage of the GTP Blueprint is the pilot phase. It is at this time the program is offered at a small number of sites, allowing for the identification of best practices and areas of improvement prior to large scale implementation. The initial participants of the program (both students and teachers) will become key players in the program’s development by providing feedback and serving as mentors and experts as the program expands.

Following the pilot phase is the fourth stage: expansion. This is when the program begins its expansion to the rest of the district once the pilot phase has reached pre-determined benchmarks. The benchmarks should measure student and teacher engagement using quantitative data along with qualitative data provided through surveys and conversations. The expansion of the program does not have an exact end date and instead is centered on both short-term and long-term goals.



The final stage of implementation is evaluation. Although it is the last stage, it is certainly a very important and continuous one. The advisory committee should review the “grow your own” program from a variety of lenses to determine its impact and how it is addressing the needs of the district. The evaluation should look at student interest in pursuing a career in education along with future impact on the existing teacher shortage. Through the evaluation stage, changes are made as deemed necessary.

As districts work to address teacher shortages and diversify their educator workforce, you are encouraged to recommend a “grow your own” program to provide an investment for long-term success in the world of educator recruitment.

To learn more about “grow your own” programs and to gain access to the GTP Blueprint, visit [educatorsrising.org/grow](http://educatorsrising.org/grow).



Stephen is the National Policy and Communications Coordinator for PDK International/Educators Rising and is studying Business Administration and Global Politics at Arizona State University. With experience in career and technical education (CTE) and career and technical student organizations (CTSOs), he understands the need for career pathway opportunities beginning in high school to set students up for success in their future careers.



Lisa is the Director of Outreach and Engagement at PDK International/Educators Rising. Lisa spent almost 10 years as a career and technical education (CTE) teacher and Family and Consumer Sciences Department Chair, teaching Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Education Professions as well as worked to create the curriculum and implementation of the Teacher Academy of Maryland. She served as a teacher education recruiter at Ball State University and most recently as the Education & Training Program Specialist and Educators Rising Arizona State Adviser for the Arizona Department of Education.

# INCLUSION...NOT ISOLATION: MAKING IT WORK FOR YOUR STUDENTS AND STAFF

by Louis Bronk, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Talent Development & Dr. Mark Benigni, Superintendent;  
Meriden Public Schools; Meriden, CT



The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced and accelerated the need for teachers and other staff to continuously learn, reflect and adapt to the changing demands in our classrooms. In the Meriden Public Schools, we recognize the challenges our staff faces as we progress through the current pandemic crisis. How do we promote a culture where student and staff learning are valued and supported during this time? How do we assure staff satisfaction and professional growth, while overcoming the challenges brought on by the repercussions of COVID-19? We felt that continuing professional learning during this time was crucial to refresh and expand staff knowledge and skills and help them adjust to the rapidly evolving classroom landscape they currently face.

We are most proud of our leadership work with our unions and management, using collaboration as a springboard for innovation and improvement. The district and our union leadership are strong partners in helping the Meriden Public Schools achieve its unified vision, ensuring that here—all students succeed! Partnering with our unions and staff on professional development opportunities has strengthened our ongoing collaboration, inspired our staff and improved the climate and culture of our district. It was these strong partnerships that led to the success of the district's digital transformation. All of our students, staff and families have embraced 1:1 plus learning environments, access for all, a single sign-on solution and digital content embedded into the core district curriculum. Our teachers have led the charge and our students have certainly benefited from their efforts during the past twenty months.

We knew we could not say we value our staff if we did not make efforts to provide multiple opportunities for growth and engagement during a time that our team most needed to feel valued, respected and heard. We needed to take advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves for professional growth in remote, hybrid and in-person settings. By providing teacher choice in professional development options and encouraging our staff to utilize the many high-quality online and virtual trainings, we empowered teachers to choose a topic of interest to them in an area of continuous improvement. Also, while we kept school facilities open and available, teachers were welcome to participate in their professional learning experience at home or any place where they felt most comfortable.

During the 2020-2021 school year, our district was committed to providing a learning option that made sense for individual families. To that end, we developed a plan that allowed students to choose full in-person instruction or a virtual remote learning option. We assigned teachers to either dedicated in-person or virtual classrooms.

This allowed our teaching staff to focus on one mode of instruction and not have to split their focus between students in class and at home. This model helped teachers focus on their student's individual needs, maintain mitigation strategies and keep students engaged throughout the school year. We take great pride that we did not experience a school closure throughout the entire school year and that we were able to accomplish student growth, achievement and social-emotional wellness during these challenging times.

As we entered the 2021-2020 school year, we knew we had to adjust our approach to educating our students. We anticipated the majority, if not all, students would be returning to in-person instruction. Completely virtual classrooms for our students and staff would not be an option. Though we made great strides in attaining a high vaccination rate for staff (almost 92%) and many of our eligible students were also vaccinated, we knew that many students would still need to be subject to quarantine if deemed a close contact. An option for students to access their classrooms virtually if quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure, was necessary. It was time to collaborate with our teacher's union once again on a viable solution that met the needs of our students and families.

Our teachers' union leadership understood the importance of providing students access to classrooms during times of quarantine, so we leveraged model classes where this occurred very successfully. They did not believe that merely accessing assignments for ten days or more was what was best for our students. We needed to strike a balance! However, not all of our teachers would be prepared for providing hybrid instruction, even for a short time. They may not have all the equipment necessary to facilitate this easily in the classroom. We agreed that staff would be provided training and equipment to help support this mode of instruction. Since our teachers had varying levels of experience, we decided on self-paced training modules that staff could access when needed at a time convenient for them. This would require additional time of our staff, so we agreed to provide a payment for the estimated amount of time the training would require.

Staff were able to sign on for individual or small group training with our Technology Integration Specialists. Technology Integration Specialists are full-time teachers in our district who have developed their skillset in utilizing technology in the classroom to help engage students and promote anytime-anywhere learning. We were fortunate that we invested in technology, incorporated digital content and trained staff prior to the pandemic. This allowed us to provide the level of support our schools, staff and families needed to experience success. Our Technology Integration Specialists are available on request throughout the year to support teachers and provide professional development.

Schools across the nation are wrestling with how to keep students in quarantine actively learning and engaged with their classmates. In Meriden, with a creative partnership with our teachers' union, all students on quarantine will be joining their classes virtually. We cannot afford a lost school year, a lost school week, a lost school day or even one lost school class. Our students and families are counting on us more than ever.



Louis Bronk is the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Talent Development for Meriden Public Schools. His work includes developing University partnerships and leading the district Minority Teacher Recruitment initiatives. He has presented at the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) annual conference, the UCONN Executive Leadership Program, NEAG School of Education, the Connecticut Associations of Schools (CAS) and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE/CAPSS).



Dr. Mark Benigni has been an educator for over twenty-five years and is starting his twelfth year as Superintendent of the Meriden Public Schools. Dr. Benigni served as a teacher, principal, four-term mayor and has authored over 35 articles in educational journals. Since Dr. Benigni's arrival in 2010, the Meriden Public Schools has increased student academic achievement and growth and created schools where students and staff want to be. Dr. Benigni has presented at national venues, taught doctorate classes, and currently serves as President of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents after having spent many years as co-chair of the Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents.

# MOST COMPLEX LAWS FACING HR: FMLA, ADA AND TITLE IX

by Dr. Andrea Anthony, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Student Services; Rutherford County Schools; Murfreesboro, TN

Navigating complex employment issues is both time-consuming and often creates a need for legal clarification. If you want to maintain your status as the state's school system employer of choice, then you must stay abreast of all the compliance guidelines. Because employment laws are continually evolving, we must remain proactive and keep an eye on 2021-2022's most pressing issues. To prevent costly and time-consuming litigation, it is important to be compliant with FMLA, ADA and Title IX legislation.

First, FMLA is the number one area of Human Resources about which we receive the most inquiries. Enacted in 1993 by former President Bill Clinton, FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons, with the continuation of group health insurance under the same terms/conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Today, this act covers approximately 2/3 of all United States employers. Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 12 work weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for these reasons: the birth of a child/to bond with the newborn child within one year of birth; the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to build a relationship with the newly placed child within one year of placement; to care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent who has a serious health condition; a serious health condition that makes the employee "unable to perform the functions" of his or her job; and any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent is a military member on covered active duty.

The goal of FMLA is to help employees balance their health and work needs. To be eligible for FMLA time off in our school system, an employee must have worked for us at least twelve months and for a minimum of 1,250 hours during the 12-months

immediately before the leave. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, since FMLA began, it has been used in more than 100 million instances. When examining the statutory words of "serious health condition," it is always best to let the employee's medical provider verify and clarify that determination. Not allowing an employee who has the proper FMLA documentation to take their time could lead to a multi-million-dollar lawsuit for an HR leader. An employee must be granted this time even if it presents a hardship or inconvenience on the school or system. Otherwise, an employee could claim an illegal interference with their rights under FMLA. FMLA cannot be used as retribution for employment actions or a reason to terminate. If the employer does decide to terminate an employee, then it must be for a reason unrelated to the FMLA leave, such as poor job performance. It is imperative to enforce FMLA procedures systematically and to act in "good faith and with objective reasonableness" to prevent costly litigation.

The second area where we receive questions is the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, and how some employees can qualify for extended leave under it. ADA does not set a cap on the time allowed for leave. An employee can be eligible for ADA leave on their first day of employment. The employer must look at all the information because the time allowed depends on the situation. To clarify further, an employee can take time off if they meet the criteria of a "person with a disability" under ADA even if they have used up FMLA leave time. An ADA "disability" is an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. The impairment can be psychological or physiological.

An impairment can be substantially limiting even if it is for a short time, or episodic or in remission. Title I of the ADA prohibits private employers and state

and local governments from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities based on their limitations. Sometimes a reasonable accommodation can be made when the employee returns to transfer them to an open position where they can meet those new job requirements within the limits of their disability.

As with any other accommodation, the goal of providing leave as accommodation is to afford employees with disabilities equal employment opportunities. The employer must provide "reasonable accommodation" to an employee with a disability, unless doing so would cause an "undue hardship"- a significant difficulty or expense. There is no requirement to accommodate a perceived disability.

Our third area is Title IX. Title IX was enacted in 1972 and has undergone several revisions to include the August 14, 2020 final ruling. Title IX, 20 U.S. Code 1681 explains that no person in the United States based on sex shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The 2020 changes included a narrower definition of sexual harassment, greater focus on the accused's due process rights, occurs when the school has "substantial control" over the context of the harassment and the harasser with actual notice of the misconduct and acting deliberately indifferent to the situation. This revised process changes the role of the Title IX coordinator and requires an investigation/formal complaint process with tweaks to the existing



The EEOC, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, continues to receive charges indicating that some employers may be unaware of Commission positions about leave and the ADA. Employers may not know that they may have to modify policies that limit the amount of leave employees can take when they need additional leave as a reasonable accommodation. Employer policies that require employees on extended leave to be 100 percent healed or able to work without restrictions may deny some employees reasonable accommodations that would enable them to return to work. In education, we want our employees back and healthy as soon as possible. That is why it is very important to make this an interactive process.

notice requirements. Additional changes are in the response to a report versus a formal complaint and the ability to provide supportive measures and a process for emergency removal.

Sexual harassment is defined as: employee quid pro quo (participation/employment is conditioned on the submission to sexual conduct, whether verbal, nonverbal or physical in nature); hostile environment (unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person's equal access to the recipient's education program or activity) and Clery Act (Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act)/Violence Against

Women Act. Remember, you must post on your website the Title IX coordinator's name or title and contact information including the email address, the nondiscrimination policy and the grievance procedures including how to file or report sexual harassment and how the school/system will respond. There is required training for all staff on identification and reporting sexual harassment as well as training for both the coordinator/investigator and decision maker of Title IX. You must post on your website any trainings you use. Our school system uses the online training by Brickler and Brickler, Attorneys at Law. They also have a wonderful toolkit with a wealth of resources and form letters.

As you know, these three laws are governed by the EEOC, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The EEOC website has excellent explanations and FAQ information on their website. Keeping up with the ever-changing laws and policies of human resources can be a challenge. Networking with your state and national HR organizations, as well as school board attorneys is a must. On-going training can be outsourced and train the trainer models are now very affordable, so take advantage of local talent in this area. With this knowledge, your district's compliance will prevent costly litigation and lead your district to a trust-worthy distinction.

Dr. Andrea Anthony began her secondary education career twenty-nine years ago. She began her leadership role as a high school mathematics department chair and a graduate school adjunct professor at MTSU. She has also served as a curriculum and instruction assistant principal, director of her district's K-12 summer schools, an executive principal for 12 years, and her district's coordinator of secondary education. Currently, she serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Student Services for Rutherford County Schools. She recently added her SHRM HR generalist certification and pHCLE certification from AASPA.



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**\$7B**  
estimated cost of teacher  
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**44%**  
of teachers quit within  
five years<sup>2</sup>

**46%**  
of teachers report high  
daily stress<sup>1</sup>



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information, scan  
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<sup>1</sup>Greenberg MT, Brown JL, Abenavoli RM. Teacher stress and health. The Pennsylvania State University. September 1, 2016. Available at: [RWJF.org/en/library/research/2016/07/teacher-stress-and-health.html](https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2016/07/teacher-stress-and-health.html). Accessed November 5, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Brown, G. Why new teachers are burning out early. REWIRE. March 4, 2020. Available at: [Rewire.org/new-teachers-burning-out-early](https://www.rewire.org/new-teachers-burning-out-early). Accessed November 5, 2021.

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**AASPA's 84th ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**OCTOBER 10-13, 2022 | ORLANDO, FL**

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

## Road to Recovery | Washington, DC

In October of 2021, AASPA led our members on the Road to Recovery, as we set out to provide our members with a week of quality professional development, networking opportunities and entertainment. What resulted was the AASPA 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, DC - a four-day event that attracted school personnel administrators from all around the country. The conference was a huge success, drawing over 630 attendees with more than 50 exhibit booths, 10 pre-conference sessions, 75 clinic/ignite sessions and a hybrid attendance option.

### 2021-2022 Executive Board



2021-2022 Election Results:  
 President-Elect: Dr. Dale Fisher  
 Region 1 Representative: Dr. Steve Grubbs  
 Region 2 Representative: Dr. Monica Schroeder

### 2022-2023 Executive Board Nominations:

It's time again to think about nominations for next year's Executive Board. The positions up for election are President-Elect, Secretary, Region 3 Representative and Region 4 Representative.

Special Recognition Awards were presented to outgoing board members Jennifer Duvall, Region 1 Representative, Dr. Dale Fisher, Region 2 Representative and Past President, Dr. Beth Dalton.

The gavel was passed from 2020-2021 President, Dr. Cathy Donovan, to 2021-2022 President, Brian White

The 2021-2022 budget was approved.

AASPA would like to honor its 20 year members for their dedication and service to AASPA.

Pamela Linton  
 Robert Stacy  
 Dr. Robert Stewart  
 Regina Wright

### AASPA Past Presidents



# RECOGNIZING AASPA'S BRIGHTEST

HERB SALINGER PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD  
 Recipient: Bernadette Gerace



Bernadette Gerace

RAYMOND E. CURRY AWARD  
 Recipient: J.J. Lewis



J.J. Lewis

WILLIAM L. HUNTER POINT OF LIGHT AWARD  
 Recipient: Savannah-Chatham County Public School System



Savannah-Chatham County Public School System

NEW MEMBER AWARD  
 Recipient: Dr. Rodney Lewis



Lolly Guerra, TASPAs

ARCH S. BROWN AWARD  
 Recipients: IASPA (IL) & TASPAs (TX)



Kim Chambers, IASPA

HR SPECIALIST/ SUPPORT STAFF AWARD  
 Recipients: Donna Thomas (Region 1)  
 Barbara Dombroski (Region 2)  
 Amy Haberzettle (Region 5)  
 Toi Tanton (Region 6)

THE NEWSLETTER AWARD PROGRAM  
 Recipients: Flagstaff Unified School District TASPAs



Dr. Rodney Lewis



Flagstaff Unified School District



Los Lunas Schools

DIGITAL BRANDING AWARD  
 Recipient: Savannah-Chatham County Public School System

C.S. ROBINSON AWARD  
 Recipient: Los Lunas Schools



Donna Thomas (Region 1)



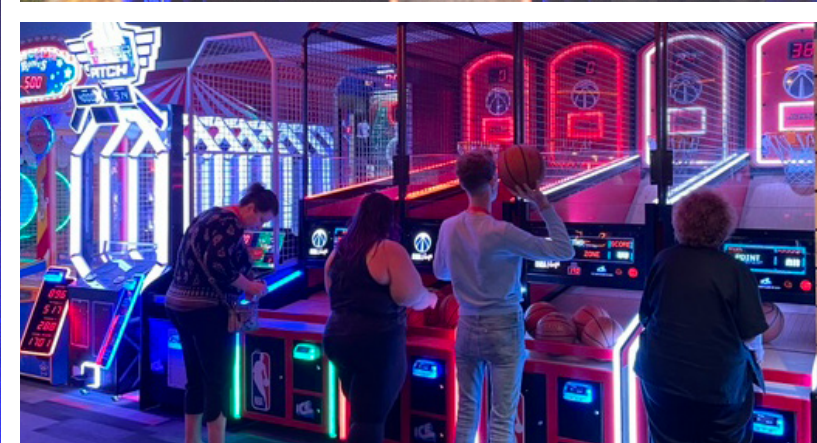
Amy Haberzettle (Region 5)



Toi Tanton (Region 6)

Congratulations to these award winners! We appreciate all that you do for the advancement of K-12 human capital leadership and your dedication to AASPA.

# 2021 CONFERENCE PHOTOS



# 2021 LEON BRADLEY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## C.D. MCPHERSON

C.D. McPherson has a B.S. from The S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. Following a career in philanthropy, entertainment and publishing in New York City, Ms. McPherson switched gears to become a dedicated mother raising a happy and healthy daughter. One of her lifelong dreams was to become a coach and empower others, so she decided to make her dream a reality and enroll in the TESL graduate certificate program at UNC Charlotte. She is currently in her final semester, which consists of student teaching. She is ready to use her diverse and colorful background working with students to achieve language proficiency and foundational tools that will allow them to succeed not only in the classroom, but well beyond. When she is not fulfilling the demands of the rigorous academic program at school, you might find her biking alongside her little girl on the greenways of Charlotte, blogging, traveling, practicing breathwork or editing her plethora of photos.



## UYIOGHOSA EBOMOYI

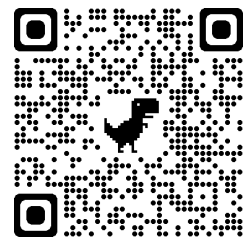
My name is Uyioghosa Ebomoyi and I am attending DePaul University for Elementary Education. I am currently a member of the Golden Key International Honor Society and the National Society of Leadership and Success. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, exercising and attending poetry events. Moreover, for the past few years, I have been volunteering for two organizations which cater to at-risk youth. My hope is that my degree will further equip me to help young kids who struggle in school. I am very grateful for being awarded the Leon Bradley Scholarship and I look forward to the future that lies ahead.



THE LEON BRADLEY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD is intended for minority college students pursuing a degree in the teaching profession and/or school leadership. The scholarship is named in honor of the late Leon Bradley, the first African American president of AASPA (1983 - 1984). Announcement of the award occurs at the Annual Conference in October each year. This award is a one-time, non-renewable scholarship. The first award was given in 2004. Funds for the scholarship are raised through fundraisers at the Annual Conference and through donations from individuals and groups.

Any members or organizations may send tax deductible contributions for the Leon Bradley Scholarship Fund to the AASPA headquarters at 7201 W. 129th Street, Suite 220, Overland Park, KS 66213.

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## NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE SUMMIT



The National Educator Shortage Summit is an interactive event that convenes focused groups of PK-12 and higher education stakeholders to address the challenges of the national shortage of teachers and the teacher pipeline to share ways to replicate practices via a national strategy. Central to this conversation will be the use of data and collaboration in sharing promising practices. Above all we hope this Summit will start comprehensive conversations among these groups in the education community and serve as a place where they can pool different perspectives.

### YOUR AGENDA WILL INCLUDE: NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE SUMMIT

- Interactive discussions about barriers, challenges, successes, recruitment and retention strategies
- Presentations from national data collectors and strategists
- Recruitment and retention sessions
- Action planning for solutions

**FEBRUARY 7 - 8, 2022  
ORLANDO, FL**



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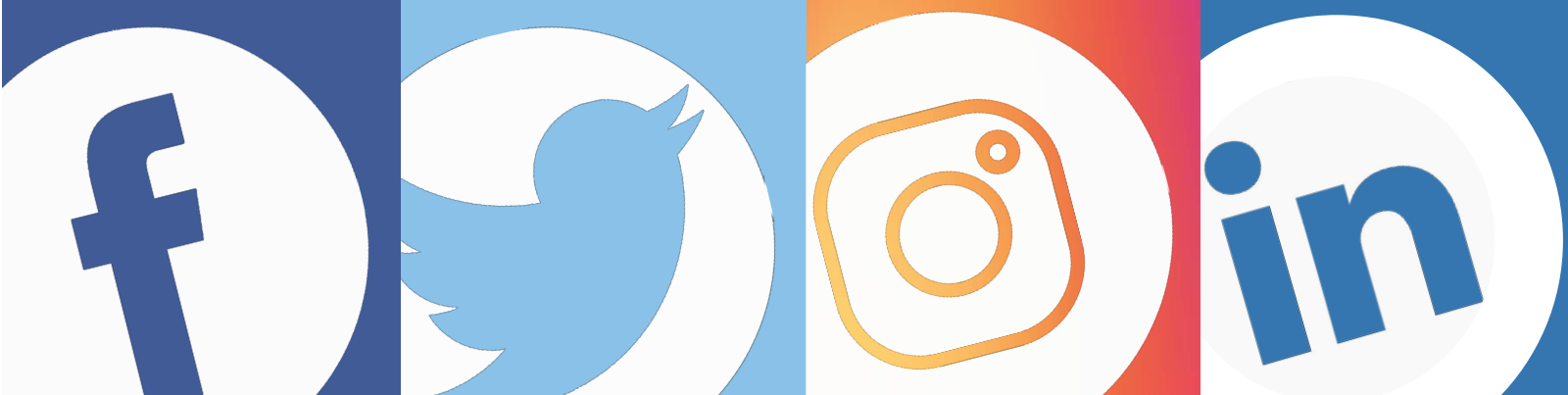
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### Who Should Attend?

PK-12 Administrators • Higher Education Representative • Agency/Department of Education Representatives • Teachers

