

Session Titles and Descriptions
AASPA 2025 Human Capital Leadership Summit
December 4-5, 2025 | Savannah, GA

AI in HR: From Everyday Tasks to Strategic Impact

Strategic Leadership

Presented by Tonya Whitehurst, Assistant Superintendent, Business Operations, Putnam County School District

HR administrators juggle a wide range of responsibilities — from compliance and policy to communication, recruitment, and culture. This session will explore how AI can be a practical partner in that work, helping with both everyday tasks and leadership-level responsibilities. Drawing on real examples from my own HR role, I'll show how AI can streamline daily work such as drafting emails, summarizing policies, and creating recruitment materials, while also supporting advanced needs like salary studies, board reports, compliance training, and process design. We'll look at before-and-after examples, discuss best practices for responsible use, and highlight how to balance efficiency with confidentiality and accuracy. Participants will leave with practical prompts, strategies, and ideas they can start using right away.

C.A.P. Leadership: How to Establish Your Communication, Accountability, and Professionalism in HR

Strategic Leadership

Presented by Deedra Davis, Executive Director of HR Services, Klein ISD

Great HR leadership doesn't just manage systems. It models how to lead people with clarity, courage, and credibility. In this interactive session, executive HR leader Deedra Davis introduces the C.A.P. Leadership framework, designed to strengthen three foundational pillars of effective leadership: Communication, Accountability, and Professionalism. Grounded in real-world employee relations and leadership development work in K-12 education, this session equips attendees with actionable strategies and tools for navigating complex situations with confidence. Whether you're a central office administrator, campus leader, or aspiring professional, the expectation is the same: Lead from your seat. This session explores the layers of confidence every leader needs to build influence, uphold integrity, and foster trust – regardless of title. Participants will leave with practical scripts, a C.A.P. checklist, and renewed clarity on how to model the kind of leadership our school systems need most.

Compensation with Clarity: Modernizing Pay Practices for Transparency and Compliance

Strategic Leadership

Presented by Franklin L. Foster, Sr. Chief Human Resources Officer, Richland School District Two

Compensation practices influence trust, satisfaction, and retention; however, they often lack transparency and consistency. This session explains how our district created a comprehensive compensation manual to update practices, ensure compliance, and promote equity. Participants will learn the process of developing a compensation philosophy and salary structures, engaging stakeholders, and effective communication. Using real data, lessons learned, and resistance strategies, it provides a practical roadmap for HR leaders to improve pay systems. Attendees will gain tools to enhance compliance, transparency, and confidence in their districts' compensation frameworks.

Leading with Recognition: A Strategic Approach to Retention

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Carol Mobley, Director, Talent Services, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System

A Strategic Approach to Retention This session explores how recognition, when embedded in HR systems and leadership practices, can drive retention, strengthen engagement, and reduce turnover. Using the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System as a case study, participants will gain practical, low-cost strategies to create a culture where employees feel valued and motivated to stay.

NextStop Teach UCPS: Building Tomorrow's Teachers Today

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Emily Kraftson, Director, Human Resources Recruitment of Union County Public Schools, Jennifer Harrist, Human Capital Coordinator, Union County Public Schools and Rebecca Kiker, HumanCapital Coordinator, Union County Public Schools

With the current state of K–12 education, “grow your own” strategies have become more important than ever. At UCPS, we're investing in the future by creating intentional pathways for students and community members to become teachers right here at home. Our NextStop Teach UCPS program introduces middle school students to the profession, offers apprenticeship opportunities after high school, and provides tuition-free support to earn a bachelor's degree and full teacher certification. In just one year, interest in this initiative has grown by 200%, with our cohort pipeline expanding from 20 to more than 50 future teachers for the 2025–26 school year. With over seven unique pathways, we are transforming the way districts think about teacher recruitment and retention. Join us for this session to explore the steps behind our success, share your own district's strategies, and collaborate on new ideas to expand the teacher pipeline. Together, we can strengthen the profession and ensure every student has a great teacher in the classroom.

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Redesign the Certified Hiring Process

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Natacia Campbell Tominov, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Oak Park Elementary School District

I'll share how we've updated our certified hiring process to address key challenges like poor communication, long timelines, and uncompetitive salaries, which can cause top candidates to drop out. You'll also learn how refining our recruiting materials and job descriptions has helped us attract a broader talent pool, ensuring our hiring practices align with our goals to be an inclusive educational environment. Together, we'll explore how small changes can lead to big improvements in securing a workforce that is representative of our students where everyone has a sense of belonging.

Rethinking Compensation: Building Modern Compensation Models That Work

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Andrew Gillen, Assistant Director of Compensation and Classification, Cherry Creek School District, Lisa Laframboise, Compensation and Classification Analyst, Cherry Creek School District and Teresa Lange, President, Oehm Consulting Services

Stop settling for outdated pay systems! It's time to move beyond gut feelings and historical practices—and let data drive your compensation decisions. This high-impact session reveals how forward-thinking education leaders are leveraging data to create compensation structures that actually work. We'll crack the code on creating logical frameworks that speak to both your budget and your talent. Discover practical strategies for building data-driven pay structures that align with your strategic goals while establishing transparency. Leave with powerful tools to architect compensation systems that drive recruitment, boost retention, promote equity, and withstand scrutiny—transforming your approach to compensation from a pain point to a powerful advantage.

Rolling Out the Red Carpet: Year-Round Onboarding That Works

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Liz Potter, Human Capital Coordinator with Union County Public Schools, Ernest Marcello, Human Capital Coordinator, Union County Public Schools and Jessica Senger, Human Capital Coordinator - Operations, Union County Public Schools

Wondering how to roll out the red carpet for employees who join mid-year? Curious about ways to give them the same warm welcome as staff who start in August? At UCPS, we believe every new hire deserves to feel valued, connected, and ready to shine—no matter when they arrive. In this interactive session, you'll not only hear about our New to the U year-round orientation program—you'll experience it! Be ready to brainstorm in small groups, build a sample onboarding schedule, and role-play real-life welcome scenarios. Try out quick icebreakers you can replicate at your school, practice crafting a "Day One Connection Plan," and explore hands-on strategies for linking new staff with technology, resources, and colleagues. You'll leave with practical tools, ready-to-use activities, and creative ideas to ensure every teacher and classified staff member feels like an integral part of your team from day one.

Screening and Recommending Finalist Candidates: A New Hope

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Patrick Smith, Executive Director, Fort Worth ISD

This presentation "begins with the end in mind" (S. Covey) and explores the WHY for completing thorough work-history reviews and "live" reference checks with current and previous supervisors of finalists recommended for hire. Learn how a large, urban school district looked at separation data related to acute and chronic unacceptable performance, and what was learned when surveying its 300+ hiring managers related to checking for red flags when making a final recommendation for employment.

Stick Around: Making First Impressions Count for Teacher Retention

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Lydia Gaddis, Chief Human Capital Officer, Springfield City School District

Discover how Springfield City School District transforms first impressions into lasting commitment. Using district data, we'll explore practical onboarding and mentorship strategies that strengthen teacher support systems, boost retention, and build a resilient, engaged certified workforce.

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Strategic Approach to Supporting Early Career Educators: Teacher Induction Professionalism Series

Recruitment & Retention

Presented by Michele Stephens, Chief Human Resources Officer, Rockdale County Public Schools

In this session, we will share insights from a targeted professional learning series designed to support first- and second-year Special Education teachers. Aimed at HR leaders seeking to strengthen teacher induction and retention, the session will explore how a structured approach to early career support can foster professional growth and long-term commitment. Participants will gain an overview of the Professionalism Series, which includes ongoing development in key areas such as district and school organizational structures, IEP best practices, classroom management, certification planning, and calendar-specific responsibilities like parent-teacher conferences. We will also highlight outcomes related to teacher growth and retention, offering practical strategies and reflections that can inform human capital initiatives in other districts.

Teaching, Learning and Talent: The Human Side of School Technology

Strategic Leadership

Presented by Jessica Iovinelli, Assistant Superintendent of Innovation and Information, Addison School District 4

In today's schools, technology isn't just a support function—it's a critical pillar of both instruction and operations. This session explores how to strategically build and sustain a technology team that supports both teaching and learning while maintaining the infrastructure needed for secure, reliable, and scalable school systems.