

Session Titles and Descriptions
AASPA 2025 VRROOM Summit | Virtual
(All sessions will be presented in CST.)

Wednesday, February 19 - Recruitment & Retention

Beyond the Job Fair: The Digital Transformation of Teacher Recruitment

Process Management, Talent Acquisition, Recruitment

Presented by Liz Young, Executive Director of Recruitment, Retention and Strategy, Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, GA

With declining enrollment in teacher education programs and the evolving job market, this presentation delves into how Fulton County transitioned from traditional recruitment methods to an online-first approach, improving hiring outcomes. Attendees will leave with specific strategies for reaching candidates in a digital age.

Blueprint for Success: Mapping a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Teacher Recruitment & Retention

Process Management, Talent Acquisition, Recruitment

Presented by Cris Seidel, Director, & Kala Green, Coordinator, Educate Kansas - Greenbush USD #609, Girard, KS

Educator vacancies nationwide have reached an all-time high, influenced by complex and multifaceted challenges. To address this crisis, leaders must cultivate innovative approaches to attract high-quality candidates to the profession and retain the talented educators they currently employ. This session will explore innovative approaches for recruiting and retaining top talent, with an emphasis on crafting an individualized strategic plan. Participants will learn how to identify barriers, leverage assets and develop a comprehensive total rewards roadmap. Attendees will leave equipped with practical templates and actionable tools for designing customized plans that address the unique challenges of educator recruitment and retention in their organizations.

Community Colleges: The Overlooked Gem in the Grow Your Own Model

Process Management, Talent Acquisition, Recruitment

Presented by Paulina Ngo, Student Services Analyst, Rio Salado College, Tempe, AZ

Join us for an insightful session that highlights the critical role community colleges play in building a diverse Grow Your Own teacher pipeline. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the various resources community colleges offer to help school districts create effective, inclusive pathways to teacher certification. Rio Salado College will share its recent achievement of gaining accreditation to offer a Bachelor's Degree in Education with an Emphasis in Elementary and Special Education, along with strategies for leveraging Dual Enrollment programs to identify and nurture future educators. Attendees will also discover how the first 60 credits of any bachelor's degree program can be completed at little to no cost, offering an affordable, accessible pathway into the teaching profession. This session will focus on best practices for engaging the diverse student populations that community colleges serve and how these programs can be integrated at various stages of the Grow Your Own continuum. Key takeaways will include actionable resources for states interested in partnering with community colleges and a discussion of promising national and state apprenticeship opportunities for further collaboration.

Employee Relations

Experience Management, Total Rewards, Work-Life Integration

Presented by Marco Holland, Chief Human Resources Officer, Marietta City Schools, Marietta, GA

Employee relations are at the heart of a thriving workplace, requiring HR professionals to skillfully balance the needs of employees with organizational goals and policies. In this session, we will explore the primary responsibilities of HR in managing employee relations and fostering an engaged workforce. Attendees will gain actionable insights into:

- Strategies HR professionals can use to foster positive employee relations through effective communication, grievance handling, and policy enforcement.
- Balancing employee needs with organizational goals requires clear communication, transparency, and alignment of human capital strategies.
- Trust-building in HR involves consistent, transparent practices and creating avenues for honest, open communication.

We will also answer the following questions:

- What are the primary responsibilities of HR professionals in managing employee relations within an organization?
- How does HR balance the needs of employees with the goals and policies of the organization?
- What strategies can HR implement to resolve conflicts effectively between employees or between employees and management?
- How can HR professionals build trust with employees and create an environment of open communication?
- What role does HR play in ensuring that workplace policies are fair and consistently applied to all employees?

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I've Got 99 Problems, but Recruitment Ain't One!

Process Management, Talent Acquisition, Recruitment

Presented by Jamie West, Instructional Recruitment Partner, Lake County Schools, Tavares, FL

Got recruitment problems? No worries! I've got you! Join me for a shallow dive into recruitment basics, marketing strategies, data analysis, and hosting events.

No Employee Left Behind: Providing Support for ALL Employees to Enhance Performance Management

Process Management, Talent Development, Performance Management

Presented by Tanisha Holland, HRTD Director, Talent Development, Loudoun County Public Schools, Ashburn, VA

The supervision and evaluation process provide a protocol to assist supervisors with decisions regarding staff performance and an opportunity to support employees with professional growth. The process is intended to promote constructive, continuous dialogue between employee and employer in an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual trust. Offering high quality support for all employees is paramount to their success.

In this session participants will:

- Examine ways that evaluators can provide informal and formal performance management support.
- Learn from fellow colleagues their best practices for providing support.
- Gain insight into LCPS' performance management support initiatives.

Three Effective Supervision Strategies to Improve Employee Retention

Experience Management, Total Rewards, Work-Life Integration

Presented by Cheryl Hinzman, Administrative Coordinator, Performance Management, Prince William County Schools, Manassas, VA

Gallup research indicates that one of the most important drivers of employee engagement is the quality of supervision and support employees receive from their immediate supervisor. Supervisors who cultivate positive caring relationships with their direct reports generate high levels of engagement. This session will present effective supervision strategies and showcase resources that ensure employees feel supported, engaged, and effective in their roles. Engaging in ongoing, meaningful dialogue and building relationships from the moment they start in their position allow employees to immediately feel supported by their leadership. Initiating dialogue and facilitating activities that build a shared understanding of the supervision process empower employees to understand performance standards and the expectations for achieving them. Planning effective coaching conversations that focus on the employees' individual strengths while collaboratively setting goals build efficacy and confidence in their skills. Fostering reflective coaching conversations with direct reports encourages professional growth and creates a safe space for open communication that invests in employees' well-being. Engaging in these strategies allows employees to be equipped with appropriate skills and promotes a feeling of support, belonging, and comfort that will compel them to remain in the current role. Participants will leave this session with resources they can immediately implement with their employees.

Using AI and Tech Tools to Enhance Retention with Stay Interviews

Experience Management, Total Rewards, Work-Life Integration

Presented by Susan Fumo, Assistant Superintendent of HR, Freeport School District, Freeport, IL

In response to the growing national teacher shortage, Freeport School District (IL) conducted 206 Stay Interviews with certified staff. Learn how we leveraged technology to streamline this comprehensive feedback initiative. Our innovative approach revealed critical insights about teacher satisfaction, key retention factors, and areas requiring immediate attention. We'll share our interview questions, survey methodology, and most importantly, how we're translating this feedback into concrete actions

Thursday, February 20 - Orientation, Onboarding & Mentoring

Deep Dive into the Orientation Ocean

Experience Management, Talent Acquisition, Onboarding & Orientation

Presented by Jamie West, Instructional Recruitment Partner, Lake County Schools, Tavares, FL

Having trouble navigating the chaotic waters of the Orientation Ocean? Learn how to comfortably address all necessary topics, but also the content your new employees want to hear. All aboard!

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Developing a Mentor Program for Emergency Certified Teachers

Experience Management, Talent Development, Training & Development

Presented by Douglas Taylor, Director of Human Resources, Macon County Public Schools, Tuskegee, AL

This 1-hour session aims to equip participants with a comprehensive understanding of the key steps involved in implementing a successful mentor program that will support teachers working under emergency certifications. Participants will learn about the importance of mentorship in supporting new teachers and gain insight into effective mentor selection and training strategies. The webinar will discuss how to establish clear program goals and objectives, develop a mentor-mentee matching process, and create a supportive and collaborative environment for participants. Additionally, participants will explore methods for ongoing program evaluation and refinement to support school system goals and objectives.

Driving Success Through Onboarding

Experience Management, Talent Acquisition, Onboarding & Orientation

Presented by Quiana Peterson, Instructional Recruitment Partner, Lake County Schools, Tavares, FL

What can the movie franchise “Fast & Furious” teach us about onboarding? You’re about to find out. This session will race through the four main steps of onboarding and drift into resources available to help new hires succeed. Then we’ll cruise through some ideas on how to make new employees feel valued and excited about joining the team. This session will cover approaches for instructional and internal staff.

Empowering Educators: Transformative Strategies for Effective Teacher Mentoring

Experience Management, Talent Development, Training & Development

Presented by Jodie Graham, Executive Director of Human Resources, Ankeny Community School District, Ankeny, IA

Supporting new teachers is critical to fostering professional growth, increasing retention, and ensuring job satisfaction. This session will equip participants with strategies that are innovative and research-based to foster professional growth and development for new teachers, ultimately increasing retention and job satisfaction. In this session Jodie Graham will:

- Share a range of transformative mentoring strategies, including peer coaching, reflective practices, and tailored feedback techniques that foster professional growth for new teachers.
- Share explicit examples of how building supportive, and trusting relationships with mentees, focused on social and emotional development, active listening, goal-setting, and constructive feedback has enhanced our new teacher acclimation and experience.
- Highlight the importance of a collaborative, community-driven approach to mentoring that encourages mutual learning and shared responsibility for growth.

Mental Mentor: Doing Leadership as a Developer of Talent

Experience Management, Talent Development, Training & Development

Presented by Kirk Koennecke, Superintendent, Indian Hill Exempted Village School District, Cincinnati, OH

Participants will learn about the distinct methods necessary to grow mentoring skills for others through interactive dialogue and activities in this virtual session.

Onboarding – There’s No Place Like Home!

Experience Management, Talent Acquisition, Onboarding & Orientation

Presented by Gretchen Lawn, Consultant, Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio, Independence, OH

We all know the difference between a house and a home. A successful and comprehensive onboarding program should help to make ‘Work’ not feel like a place or a building, but somewhere with feeling, emotion and value that contributes to a person’s life. Ready to learn more and put in the work? It isn’t going to be easy, as change never is. But by focusing on designing support systems for both Classified and Certified new staff members, we can begin to shift the way our employees view ‘work.’ And maybe, just maybe, we can make it feel more like Home!

Orientation with Purpose: Embedding Mission, Vision & Culture

Experience Management, Talent Acquisition, Onboarding & Orientation

Presentation by Jennifer Hart, Chief Office of HR & Administration, Aiken County Public School District, Aiken, SC

A well-structured orientation program does more than introduce new employees to policies and procedures—it immerses them in the mission, vision, and culture of your organization. This session will explore strategies for designing an orientation experience that goes beyond logistics, ensuring new hires feel connected, engaged, and aligned with the organization’s core values from day one.

Key Takeaways:

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1. **Align Orientation with Mission & Vision** – Learn how to integrate your organization's core values into the onboarding process to inspire and motivate new employees.
2. **Create a Culture-First Experience** – Discover ways to immerse new hires in the workplace culture, fostering a sense of belonging and long-term commitment.
3. **Make Orientation Interactive & Impactful** – Explore techniques to engage employees with meaningful activities that reinforce mission-driven work.

Western Dubuque Onboarding and Retention Strategies

Experience Management, Talent Acquisition, Onboarding & Orientation

Presentation by Rick Colpitts, HR Specialist, Kelly Simon, Director of Elementary Education, Jake Feldmann, Director of Secondary Education, and Dr. Dan Butler, Superintendent, Western Dubuque Community Schools, Farley, IA

Better Every Day isn't just a vision statement that hangs on a wall, it is a culture that the Western Dubuque School District has been intentionally working to create for the past eight years. Our district has invested a significant amount of time, talent, treasure in our greatest resource, our people. This work has involved training all staff to be more positive and resilient even when things are very challenging. The work has evolved significantly since it began in 2017, and the impact it has had on our staff and students has been transformative.