

THE COMPASS

DIRECTION FOR HR LEADERS IN EDUCATION

Should They Stay or Should They Go?

In the age of the teacher shortage, keeping
excellent staff is a priority



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President's Corner From the Desk of Dr. Dale Fisher, AASPA President



Hello Friends,

As we approach the beginning of the new school year, I wanted to take a moment to extend my warmest wishes to each and every one of you. Your dedication and passion in shaping the lives of students and adults in our educational institutions are truly commendable. It should never go unnoticed that it is the unwavering commitment of K-12 HR leaders who work tirelessly to place talented educators into classrooms that support all the constituents we serve.

Furthermore, I am thrilled and excited about the upcoming Annual Conference in October, where we will be coming together in Anaheim, California. This event promises to be an incredible opportunity for professional development, networking and gaining valuable insight and perspective into our profession. As always, the conference will serve as a platform for us to exchange ideas, share experiences and collectively grow as an organization. I encourage each of you to broaden your knowledge base and choose the sessions that will force you outside of your comfort zone. While in Anaheim, I strongly encourage you to thank an AASPA staff member for their efforts! This amazing group, led by AASPA's Executive Director, Kelly Coash-Johnson, can't be honored enough for the opportunities they have coordinated for us in Anaheim. The PD will be amazing and the networking events will be MEMORABLE!

Once again, I wish you all a fantastic start to the upcoming school year, filled with enthusiasm and determination to make a difference. And just as important, I look forward to connecting with you in a few short months for an unforgettable Annual Conference in Anaheim, California. Let's embrace the incredible opportunities that soon await us.

Thank you for your dedication and I am honored to lead and support such an exceptional group of professionals.

Warm regards,

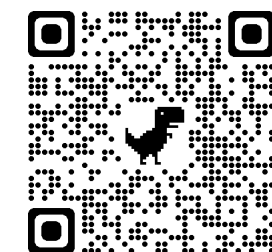
Dr. Dale Fisher
AASPA President

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TO TEACH OR NOT TO TEACH

by Chuck Miller, Executive Director of Human Resources;
Darlington County School District; Darlington, SC

The teaching profession has long been considered a noble endeavor, inspiring young minds and preparing future generations for whatever may lie ahead of them. However in recent years, there has been a noticeable decline in the number of American high school students aspiring to enter the teaching profession.



In fact, between 2009 and 2014, enrollments in teacher preparation programs dropped 35% nationwide – a true indicator of the teacher shortage America is facing today. There are many facets to the teacher shortage that must be considered, including changes in student populations, voluntary attrition, emergency/alternative certification opportunities and regional trends. The root of the problem, however, may be found in our high schools, where young adults typically decide on an initial career path. Here, we will explore four key factors that contribute to high school students' disinterest in pursuing a career in teaching.

Stigma

A 2022 Gallup poll identified teachers as having the fourth-highest ethics rating among a list of 18 American occupations and the highest among non-medical professions. Still, there seems to exist an underlying negative perception of teaching in America. The teaching profession often faces undervaluation and a lack of respect, with many perceiving it as a low-paying and thankless job. The status and financial rewards associated with other professions, such as medicine, law, engineering or technology, overshadow the allure of teaching. As such, the perception of teaching as a less prestigious occupation may dissuade high school students from considering it as a viable career choice.

Student Behavior

Since the mid 1990's, incidents associated with school discipline problems have been on the rise. Teachers reports an increase in the frequency of challenging behaviors they encounter from students, including multiple occurrences of disrespect, verbal abuse, truancy, tardiness, fighting, harassment and general classroom disruption. Incidents such as these, specifically those that stem from or lead to violence, are indicative of school environments that are less safe than they once were. Teachers are struggling, but students are equally exposed to these negative behaviors as they occur around them. Students have firsthand knowledge of the problems associated with modern American schools. Given this, and the increased frequency of more violent threats such as school shootings, it should come as no surprise that high school students would choose to pursue a career other than teaching – a career without the safety concerns and student discipline problems associated with today's schools.

Teacher Salary vs. Teacher Stress

Of course, financial considerations play a major role in career decisions. Unfortunately, teaching is often associated with relatively lower salaries and higher demands compared to other professions requiring similar levels of education. A recent study of the ongoing teacher shortage found that American teachers work 200 more contracted hours per year than their global peers. Yet, teachers' salaries have changed little in the past two decades. Teachers earned 32.9% less than graduates with comparable degrees. Understanding this, many high school students are concerned about their future financial stability and find it difficult to reconcile their aspirations with the economic realities of becoming a teacher.

Teaching can be an emotionally and intellectually demanding profession. High school students witness firsthand the challenges faced by teachers, including heavy workloads, long hours, classroom management issues and the pressure of standardized testing, all with less-than-competitive pay. The stress and burnout associated with teaching can be off-putting, particularly when students observe teachers struggling to balance their professional, personal and financial lives. As a result, students may opt for less demanding career paths that offer a better work-life balance with more attractive salaries.

Lack of Professional Autonomy

Academic freedom can play a vital role in teachers' professional development. In one study, it was found that teachers who participated in programs that promote autonomy developed several empowering personal and professional resources, including greater efficacy, more intrinsic goal-setting habits and greater workplace satisfaction. However, modern public school teachers do not enjoy the autonomy afforded to their predecessors or most post-secondary educators of today. Education policies and standardized testing have placed increased emphasis on conforming to rigid curricula and standardized assessments. This level of strict oversight often restricts teachers' autonomy and creativity in the classroom, leading to a sense of dissatisfaction. High school students, in witnessing these limitations, may feel discouraged about pursuing a teaching career that restricts their ability to innovate and adapt their own unique skills to meet the needs of students.

There are most certainly a number of factors contributing to the ongoing teacher shortage, some more impactful than others. Still, one could argue

that dwindling interest among high school students in pursuing a career in teaching is of dire concern and trends indicate the problem could become exponentially worse in the coming years without swift intervention. Students know of the stigma often associated with the teaching profession. They witness the violence, disrespect and behavioral problems that persist in the very classrooms they occupy. Further, they are privy to the stress teachers endure, the workload they bear and limitations thrust upon them, all while their non-competitive salaries are posted as public information.

Addressing these concerns requires collective efforts from policymakers, school leaders and society as a whole. By collectively promoting the value and impact of teaching, addressing behavioral issues and violence through mental health supports, raising base teacher pay to comparatively competitive levels and fostering a supportive work environment free of extraneous limitations, we can reinvigorate the appeal of teaching and encourage more high school students to embrace this noble profession. Perhaps in this way, we can begin to make strides in our effort to increase the supply of classroom teachers amidst an ever-growing demand.



With more than 28 years in education, Chuck Miller currently serves as the Executive Director of Human Resources for the Darlington County School District in his hometown of Darlington, South Carolina. He serves on the Senior Leadership Team and oversees the day-to-day operation of the Human Resources Department in a district of 9,500 students and more than 1,500 teachers and staff.

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BUILDING AN EMPOWERED HR CULTURE THAT IGNITES SUCCESS

by Danielle Copeland, Director of Human Resources;
Malakoff ISD; Malakoff, TX
Artimese Braddy Lawrence, Coordinator of Human Resources;
Tyler ISD; Tyler, TX

In today's swiftly evolving and competitive recruitment landscape, the contribution of human resources to propelling positive outcomes remains paramount. HR has evolved far beyond its administrative roots to become a driving force behind organizational success. Evolving beyond conventional administrative tasks, our profession has emerged as a catalyst in molding organizational culture, enhancing employee involvement and strategic endeavors. This article will delve into the art of building an empowered HR culture that not only invigorates the workplace, but also sets the stage for unprecedented achievements. From nurturing leadership to amplifying employee potential, we uncover the strategies that kindle this cultural transformation. To unlock the full potential of HR, it is crucial to foster a culture that ignites motivation, inspiration and achievement. We will focus on creating an empowered and dynamic culture that fuels organizational success.

Challenging Assumptions and Embracing Fresh Perspectives

Through each stride we take, we pave the way for a future where HR is not just a function but a force—a driving force that propels the organization towards a horizon of limitless possibilities. Changing culture starts with challenging assumptions and embracing new perspectives.

Encourage HR professionals to think beyond traditional norms and preconceived notions.

By fostering a culture that encourages innovative thinking

and the exploration of unconventional ideas, HR can unlock untapped potential and drive unprecedented success.

Encouraging a Growth Mindset

The symphony of diverse voices and perspectives harmoniously resonates, nurturing innovation and infusing fresh outlooks into the organization's DNA. Cultivating a growth mindset within the HR department is essential for igniting success. Emphasize the importance of continuous learning, resilience and adaptability. Encourage HR professionals to view challenges as opportunities for growth and improvement. By promoting a growth mindset, HR can inspire individuals to overcome obstacles and reach new heights of achievement.

Nurturing a Culture of Collaboration and Support

As the seeds of this culture germinate and flourish, they manifest in organizational excellence that radiates far beyond the confines of any spreadsheet or report. Building an HR culture that ignites success requires a foundation of collaboration and support. Encourage HR professionals to work together as a cohesive team, leveraging each other's strengths and expertise. Foster an environment where individuals feel safe to ask for help, share ideas and provide support to one another. By nurturing a culture of collaboration, HR can drive innovation and achieve exceptional outcomes.

Empowering HR Professionals through Autonomy

In the tapestry of organizational growth, an empowered HR culture serves as the vibrant thread that weaves

together the aspirations of individuals and the ambitions of the collective. Providing HR professionals with a sense of autonomy and ownership over their work is essential for igniting motivation and driving success. Trust HR professionals to make informed decisions and take ownership of their projects and initiatives. Provide avenues for professional development and progress, enabling them to contribute to the organization's strategic objectives.

Recognizing and Celebrating Achievements

It is a call to action for all stakeholders to actively participate in sculpting an environment where shared values and unwavering dedication are celebrated. To ignite motivation and inspire success, it is vital to recognize and celebrate achievements within the HR department. Implement a culture of appreciation by acknowledging individual and team accomplishments. Regularly celebrate milestones, innovative ideas and exemplary performance. By recognizing HR professionals' contributions, organizations create a positive and motivating environment that fosters continuous excellence.

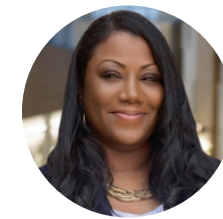
Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Beyond the tangible outcomes, this journey is a testament to the organization's commitment to fostering a workplace where HR professionals thrive as architects of change. An empowered HR culture is driven by a commitment to continuous improvement. Acknowledging the capacity of professionals to lead transformative efforts, sparks a drive within HR practitioners to explore pathways collectively and individually towards growth and advancement. Doing this cultivates self-assurance and promotes a sense of ownership. Implement feedback mechanisms and processes that allow HR professionals to reflect on their performance, identify areas for improvement and develop action plans to enhance their skills and expertise.

Building a culture that ignites success within HR is a transformative journey. As barriers dissolve and horizons expand, this transformative journey not only reshapes the HR landscape, but also permeates every facet of the organization, infusing renewed energy and purpose. Creating a positive work culture where everyone feels valued, welcomed and respected is vital to an organization's success. Be sure to take your employees' feedback into account and lean on them to help cultivate a great work experience. In our unwavering pursuit of this transformation, let us remain resolute, knowing that the path to extraordinary success is paved by the bold steps taken in shaping an empowered HR culture. Let us embrace this journey by unlocking the true potential of HR, while igniting a culture that fuels organizational achievement like never before.



Danielle Copeland, Director of Human Resources at Malakoff ISD, has been in education for 19 years, with 16 of those as an administrator. She has served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and has been in Human Resources for the last four years and has a master's degree in Educational Leadership.



Artimese Braddy Lawrence, Coordinator of Human Resources at Tyler ISD, has worked in Human Resources for over 15 years and worked in public education for 11 years. She is married with 2 daughters and has a master's degree in Human Resources Development.

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE RETENTION

by Jennifer Barton, HR & Compensation Consultant;
Nicolle Gee-Guzman, HR & Compensation Consultant;
Texas Association of School Boards; Austin, TX

EXIT



The nation's "Great Resignation" ignited a trend of employees seeking new career paths, and education is no exception.

he nation's "Great Resignation" ignited a trend of employees seeking new career paths, and education is no exception. To create the best learning environment for students, school districts must be strategic in retaining their best employees as the staffing crisis in education lingers.

Understanding the Issues

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 300,000 public school teachers and staff left the profession between February 2020 and May 2022, which is a 3% drop in the education workforce.

A 2022 National Education Association poll found 55% of teachers said they would leave the profession sooner than planned, up from 37% in 2021.

55%

of teachers would leave the profession if they could

Those in education tend to have similar motives for leaving the field. Teachers are worn down by the challenges of teaching and they are also navigating more stressors including low pay, lack of respect, staffing shortages, excessive workloads and continued school disruptions.

Gone are the times when working in education was difficult, but manageable. Today, teachers and other school staff are

facing challenges beyond their control, and many are leaving in hopes of finding better opportunities in other professions.

The Importance of Retention

Employee retention directly effects the business performance and success of an organization, and it is a top challenge for most human resources departments. Additionally, the costs associated with high turnover and replacing talented employees impacts the bottom line.

Retention begins the moment an employee is hired, and it continues with the employee through their organizational journey. School districts can support strong employee retention by developing a strategic process that assesses and addresses retention efforts in a systematic way.

Steps to address employee retention should include:

- Identification of the reasons why former employees left the organization
- Understanding the connection between employees leaving and the organization's deeper issues
- Gathering supporting data to understand the issues better
- Capitalizing on available opportunities to mitigate employee turnover
- Improving processes to retain talent within the organization
- Designing a systematic approach will help the organization retain their best talent while decreasing their turnover rate over time.

The Power of Metrics

The first step to strengthen employee retention is to measure overall employee satisfaction. This is done through the collection and evaluation of relevant data directly related to employee opinions about the organization. Metrics are powerful because they can help organizational leaders better understand current challenges in employee retention and help inform leaders of culture and climate issues and concerns directly related to management.

When choosing a focus area for data collection, historical turnover and annual retention should be a starting point. Additional focus areas include employee satisfaction, employee engagement, absenteeism and any other critical area identified through data analysis.

Often, school leaders hear whispers of worry or distress from employees, but struggle to find concrete evidence identifying areas of dissatisfaction. Tracking metrics can help eliminate assumptions and provide focus areas to incorporate into district goals for managing human capital.

Metric Tools

To gather data, it's beneficial for organizations to use objective measurement tools, but there are times when informal interviews are helpful. While there are a variety of options organizations can select from to evaluate

employee satisfaction, two specific tools can provide a wealth of information to leaders.

Satisfaction surveys: Employee satisfaction surveys can help pinpoint specific areas of employee concern. This survey allows the employee to provide feedback about their job and current working conditions. It can also help determine levels of employee stress, anxiety and burnout, as well as specific workplace stressors leading to dissatisfaction. Employees can use

the survey to rate the job and organization in a variety of ways. Using a survey communicates to employees that top leaders value their input and voice.

Stay interviews:

Stay interviews are an opportunity for an informal discussion between the leader and employee to assess job satisfaction. Through conversation, the employee helps the leader identify areas of organizational strength and growth. Stay interviews are powerful because they help build trust with current

employees and provide a way for the employee to communicate thoughts, feelings and relevant information related to the organization. It is important to note that stay interviews should be conducted with current employees only – not those leaving the organization.

One other important metric is identifying the signs of when employees are intending to leave the organization. Behaviors such as decreased

Plagued by unprecedented challenges and ever-changing educational landscapes, it's no wonder that school districts are struggling to recruit and retain educational staff! School systems must take steps to ensure they have the staff to continue supporting students during these critical years, in the wake of the pandemic. This means navigating through schedules, reductions in resources and the personal impact of the pandemic on teachers and their families...

Read more on AASPA's blog

initiative and productivity, a shift in attitude, lack of commitment and dwindling enthusiasm are signs that an employee is dissatisfied. If school leaders can recognize these datapoints quickly, action can be taken swiftly and proactively to enact positive change.

The best way to determine an employee's commitment and outlook on the organization is to find out their motivation to stay. By soliciting employees' opinions through usable data sources, organizational leaders can bypass assumptions and take meaningful action to address employee retention in the organization.

The Retention Plan

Once employee satisfaction data is collected and assessed, the organization can use the information to develop an employee retention plan. Through a collaborative process with identified stakeholders, leaders can garner input and direction for the plan which will ultimately become the overarching tool the organization will use to systematically address retention issues.

The retention plan should include a few key components and there should be a clear understanding of who will be responsible for the plan. Key components include:

- Prioritized initiative areas
- Goals and objectives
- Strategies
- Resources
- Timelines


Once the retention plan is finalized, the organization can then frame the process for implementation. This systematic process of developing a retention plan will help organizations address retention and improve the organization over time.

Next Steps

All organizations have talented employees who are committed to the work, but keeping these employees is a challenge in the current work environment. By developing long-range plans to address employee satisfaction and retention, school can strengthen their education work force which will ultimately benefit all students in their schools.



Jennifer Barton is an HR and compensation consultant at TASB HR Services. She assists with compensation plan development, staffing reviews, training and other HR projects. Prior to joining TASB, Jennifer served as a principal, assistant principal, teacher and coach in Texas public schools. Jennifer holds master's degrees in education and educational leadership from The University of Texas at Austin and Lamar University, a Texas superintendent certificate and is also a SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CP).



Nicolle Gee-Guzman is an HR and compensation consultant at TASB HR Services. She has over 28 years of experience working in various roles in human resources within the public sector. Most recently, Nicolle was the director of human resources for a Texas public school district. Nicolle has a passion for HR and its impact on communities.

Check out AASPA's collection of survey instruments, including Stay Interviews

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STAY INTERVIEWS: BUILDING CULTURE BY LISTENING TO YOUR BEST EMPLOYEES

by Chris Mauger, Director of Classified Personnel;
Hesperia Unified School District; Hesperia, CA



Many organizations, including school districts, conduct exit interviews with employees as they resign, retire or “move on to greener pastures.” The idea is to get input from these now-former employees as to how the organization can either improve its practices or continue doing the things that have created positive work experiences. Among the problems with “exit” interviews, however, is that you can’t be sure that the exiting employees are being honest (although in some cases it can be brutally apparent) and since these people will no longer be with you, there is no way to correct any issues that may have led to their departure.

Enter, “The Stay Interview.”

According to Richard P. Finnegan in his book “The Stay Interview: A Manager’s Guide to Keeping the Best and Brightest,” the Stay Interview is simply a way to “improve your team’s engagement, retention and productivity just by asking your employees what you can do to make their jobs better.” These interviews are not focused on job performance, rather, the intent is to create a dialogue with key employees to gain insight as to what will “make their work lives more rewarding and comfortable.” This is accomplished by using Finnegan’s five key questions, which he calls “The SI5”):

When you travel to work each day, what things do you look forward to?
What are you learning here?
Why do you stay here?
When was the last time you thought about leaving our team? What prompted it?
What can I do to make your experience at work better for you?

It’s important for the interviewer to understand that it isn’t enough to ask these questions and jot down the employees’ responses. There needs to be a “back and forth,” and the genuine desire of the supervisor to get to the heart of how employees really feel about their overall experience.

During the 2022-23 school year, we in the Hesperia Unified School District implemented a modified version of Stay Interviews with our classified employees. In the interest of transparency, there are a few parameters that Finnegan established in his work that we chose to either modify or flat-out ignore. For example, we included three of our own questions in addition to Finnegan’s “SI5”:

If you could change something about your job, what would it be?
How do you like to be recognized?
What motivates/demotivates you?

Also, we conducted our interviews at the district office while, according to Finnegan, Stay Interviews “are not conducted by HR because supervisors are ‘too busy.’ They are conducted by supervisors who must own their talent.” For supervisors (or site principals) who choose to perform Stay Interviews, they are able to connect with their employees and develop individualized “stay plans” to meet their needs on a person-by-person basis. When Finnegan’s structure is implemented with fidelity, the result has immediate implications for sites as well as individual supervisors and employees.

During the initial phase of our Stay Interview implementation in Hesperia, our plan was to meet with selected classified employees to determine what inspires them to stick with our district through the tough times, how they are able to connect with their colleagues and how we as a district can make sure they continue to thrive. We would then use the data

gathered from these interviews to detect patterns and commonalities that answered the basic question, “What makes our best employees continue to be our best employees?” Ultimately, the goal is to share that data with site leaders to help them develop and maintain a positive culture. If they choose to build on this by conducting their own “on site” Stay Interviews, all the better.

We reached out to principals, supervisors and department directors and had them recommend Stay Interview participants, selecting employees who:

- Have been with the district for at least five years
- Have a history of positive evaluations and job performance
- Have a positive attitude
- Would be willing to engage in meaningful discussion with district leadership

When we shared this criteria with the union president, she asked, “Why are you only interviewing the positive people, why not the ones who have complaints?” It’s a fair question, which allowed me to share my own core belief in regard to building culture. Specifically, you’ll never create a positive culture by focusing on your negative people. You certainly want to hear them out whenever possible, but as far as building your culture, it’s important to find out what practices allow your best people to thrive so you can do more of those things.

While the scheduling of Stay Interviews can be dictated by many factors, we typically scheduled ours for Friday afternoons, as close to the end of the employee’s shift as possible. Because we knew that the overall tone of these conversations would be positive and engaging, we thought it would be great for the employees (and ourselves, to be honest) to end their week on a high note. As it turned out, that’s exactly what happened and our Stay Interviews proved to be among the highlights of our week.

Over the course of five months, we interviewed 75 classified employees, representing 19 different job classifications and 34 school/work sites. We stayed focused on our questions and the accompanying “probes,” but we were also able to get to know our interviewees on many levels and we gathered a significant amount of information that will help build positive work environments throughout the district.

Our key findings include:

In the general area of school and/or department culture, many of our interviewees identified “negativity of their coworkers” as something that demotivates them. While we as leaders are acutely aware of the impact our most negative employees have on us, it’s important to recognize that one or two persistently negative people can do significant damage even on a relatively large staff. Our best employees feel this, and it must be addressed by leadership. On the other hand, as our interviewees told us, one of the factors that motivates them to be at their best is engaging in meaningful work with their co-workers. Site administrators and supervisors, therefore, should be intentional in creating teams and assigning group tasks. Several of our interviewees told us that communication from their principal/supervisor is of paramount importance, even on things that might not directly impact them individually. One interviewee in particular said, “Lots of times we just end up hearing things through the grapevine, so we’re not always sure exactly what’s going on. Even a staff email from the principal would make me feel like I’m up to speed.”



One of our key questions, “If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?”, uncovered some very intriguing thoughts. We made sure to keep the interviewee focused on changes that would help them enjoy their job more. Several of our school secretaries and other office staff told us that they would like to have more opportunities to engage with students and participate in school events. They tend to feel “stuck in the office,” and “miss out on all the fun.” Other employees, especially those who are the only ones at their site with their specific job, such as librarians and nurses, would like to be able to collaborate with their job-alike colleagues from other sites on a regular basis.

We also talked a lot about recognition and appreciation, and while there weren’t any huge surprises (who doesn’t like to be appreciated?), we did learn that an overwhelming majority of our interviewees prefer authentic, low-key acknowledgement such as hand-written notes or verbal appreciation for who they are instead of splashy, public recognition or celebrations. There’s a time for those big events, but leaders shouldn’t think that a “Staff Appreciation Breakfast” can take the place of more personal positive feedback. And since we only interviewed classified employees this time around, we also learned that there is a perceived sense of disparity between the communication with and appreciation for classified staff members as opposed to teachers. Principals, especially, need to be sure to connect with all their employees on a regular basis to make sure no one feels overlooked.

Our next step is to share all of this information with our principals, administrators and supervisors and brainstorm specific ways we can do more of what our best people say is important to them. We look forward to furthering the process by conducting Stay Interviews with our teachers, using all of this feedback to improve our practices regarding employee recruitment and retention and to have a positive impact our district culture.



Chris Mauger is the Director of Classified Personnel for the Hesperia Unified School District in Southern California. Prior to joining the district's Personnel Team, Chris served Hesperia Unified for 18 years as an Elementary Principal.

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An aerial photograph of a green lawn with a stone path that splits into two directions. A person is walking on the path that leads towards the bottom right. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

SHOULD THEY STAY OR SHOULD THEY GO YOU'VE GOT TO LET THEM KNOW

by Emily Douglas-McNab, Co-Founder & Chief;
Stephen Fujii, VP of Customer Experience;
Taylor Tamang, Strategic HR Partner;
Experience Management Institute; Delaware, OH

*As The Clash famously pondered,
"Should I stay, or should I go?" It's a
question many school and district
employees ask themselves as well.*

In our years spent working in human capital in service to educators, we've dived deep into the research and practice around employee decision-making in this job-seekers' market. The problem we consistently see is this: we don't let our employees know why they should stay (or consider working with us in the first place).

Not to say that we never give our employees reasons to stay. But they come too infrequently, too "one-size-fits-all," and too lackluster and impersonal to make a real difference.

And that's why they go.

Let's explore how we can let them know that they truly are our most important assets—and why that matters for them, for education as a whole, for schools and for students.

Here are nine ways to make this happen:

1. There is no such thing as "recruiting season."

ABC means a lot in education, and for us it means "always be closing." We are always recruiting—for new employees and for keeping the ones we have. This means that your digital front door, aka your website, needs to sing. See #7 for more information about that.

In person matters, too. When you and other leaders from your district are at conferences and other events with educators from other districts, how do you engage with those from outside the district? Being open to conversations about professional growth, offering to mentor and sharing your time as a

leader can win hearts and minds in the moment and over time. Relationships matter for recruitment and retention.

And remember: your recruiters aren't your only recruiters. Every leader, and every employee, can be a recruiter for new employees and to engage current employees around reasons to stay.

2. Realize you're not the only fish in the sea.

There are many details that can tip the scale when it comes to an employee decision for your district or another.

- Did they go to school with you?
- Are you a shorter drive time for them?
- Do you offer training, certifications, continuing education or thought leadership opportunities that spark their interest?

The reasons are as different as the employees you serve, so it's important to uncover what motivates them, what bothers them and what you can do to close any gaps. We suggest creating personas for each stage of the employee lifecycle, from recruitment to exit (and return).

3. Leverage your greatest asset, your people.

Gallup data have demonstrated one common theme for years: people who have someone at work that they consider a friend at work are more likely to stay.

While not all colleagues are friends, making close connections at work matters to most people. How do you support this as an organization?

Another reminder on leveraging the power of people has to do with understanding each employee's career desires. These will change over time, so it's critical for

managers to stay close to what matters for moving employees forward in the organization—whether that means lateral or vertical changes will be determined on an individual basis.

4. Understand why people choose to stay with you as an employer.

By conducting stay interviews, you can better know the nuances behind retention and turnover. Reasons to stay and go are different for every employee. According to McKinsey, the share of workers planning to leave their jobs remains unchanged from 2021, at 40 percent. Mobility is high.

This current market means that job seekers often choose between multiple offers to pick a new job. It also means that organizations are competing for the same talent—and all recruiters know the best recruiters are current employees. Use the stay interview as a way to connect with them, learn more about what makes them tick and follow through on what else they need to stay with you.

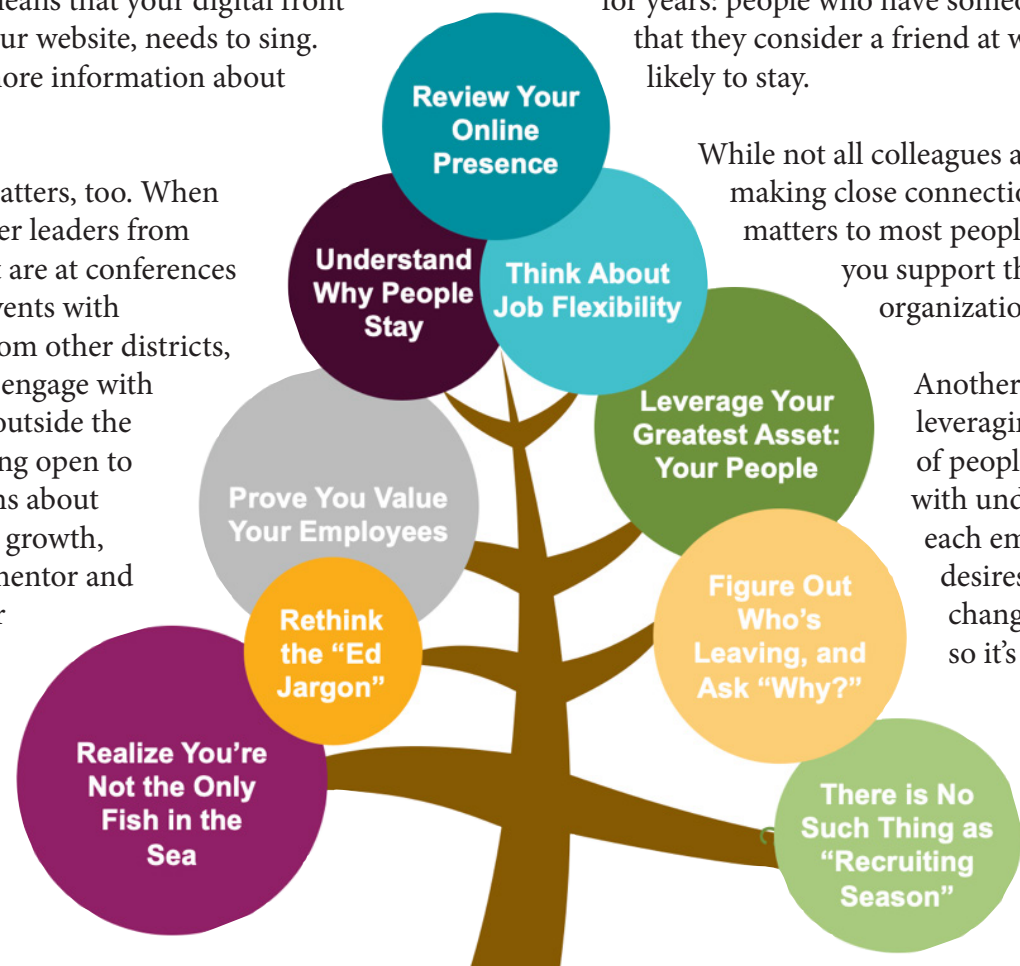
Stay interview questions should be open-ended and exploratory. They should be conducted on a recurring basis by supervisors, as part of the normal conversation in periodic touch-base meetings. And you can incorporate rolling annual stay interviews facilitated by human resources.

Spend most of the interview listening, and you may be surprised by some of the answers.

5. Figure out the profile of the people who are leaving you... and ask them "why?"

This means that we must dedicate ourselves to conducting exit interviews, as tough as they are, for everyone. It's a good time to revisit your employer value proposition (EVP). The EVP communicates the value or benefits employees receive in return for the skills, capabilities and experience they bring to your organization.

In the exit interview, you can ask questions to analyze the gaps in your EVP, from their perspective. What was a missed opportunity? How is their new position promising to give them opportunities? An important thing to remember in the exit interview: What you say, and how you engage, can actually keep your relationship strong—and bridge to that



The headlines around recruiting and retaining employees in education can make the challenge seem insurmountable, yet there are steps you can take to help employee “stay or go” decisions go in your favor.

employee’s eventual return to the district. We call these employees boomerangers, and they can be true brand ambassadors to tell a before/after story. Even if those who leave don’t return, they can still share positively about the district based on the quality of the interaction in an exit interview.

6. Think about job flexibility.

We are all doing battle based on total rewards and flexibility. Businesses have decided that one battleground they can win on is pay. Compensation rates have increased substantially in the market.

School districts have stepped up with bonuses and other signing incentives. But pay isn’t the only decision point for candidates and employees. Look at other total rewards benefits such as job flexibility (for time, location or role) that have meaning, based on different personas. Your candidate and employee generations, lifecycles and life stages will play into this. Get to know what job flexibility means for each type of employee so you can deliver on that within your total rewards.

For too long, we have tied our students to “bells” and “buses,” and we know that isn’t today’s world. In a similar way, today’s talent wants to work from anywhere. Traditional schools may not be designed for “fully remote” work because the IRL (in real life) relationship between student and educator is a crucial factor in student success. However, those districts that rethink their ability to provide flexibility will WIN.

Employee feedback data from SHRM, Gallup and Qualtrics each reflect that today’s talent wants flexibility and will rethink overall compensation when that flexibility is part of the calculation.

7. Review your online presence.

As your digital front door, the district website should express what the employee experience is like in your schools. Leverage your employee and student stories on video and audio to help demonstrate this. We encourage districts to embark on video projects with a creative brief that is calibrated for storytelling to attract students and staff. The reasons students come to the district are mostly influenced by the experience they will receive in classrooms from educators. And the reasons educators choose the district is because of the chances they will have to influence students, and other educators.



Collect and share as many educator and student stories as possible, on your website, social media, display ads, billboards, streaming audio and podcasts and print collateral.

8. Rethink the “Ed Jargon” on your job posting pages.

Eduspeak is real. We get it, but people outside schools don’t. This is why we need to meaningfully translate from our world of abbreviations, acronyms and foreign (to others) language.

Take a close look at your job postings and rewrite them in common sense language. Boil down what the position is really about. Explain it as if you were speaking to a neighbor or family member not in education. If they would understand it, you’ve done well. You can use online readability checkers to test yourself.

9. Prove you value your employees.

You may give out award certificates, branded pens and notebooks and share about employee successes on your socials. But do these things matter to employees?

Go back to #2 and follow through on what drives your employees and what can solve their challenges. This is going to be very individualized, and it needs to be demonstrated by supervisors, peers and those who work at other locations that rarely interact.

The bottom line is that every moment and interaction can determine recruitment and/or retention—so every moment in an employee’s overall experience is crucial.

The headlines around recruiting and retaining employees in education can make the challenge seem insurmountable, yet there are steps you can take to help employee “stay or go” decisions go in your favor.

Past practices won’t give us the results students deserve. We must be creative and inclusive in how we recruit, hire and retain staff. Stay focused on educators’ “why” and positively influence the decision-making moments that matter most for your district, schools, other educators and students.



Emily Douglas-McNab has more than 20 years of experience working with PK-12 public schools, institutes of higher education, regional education organizations, Head Start programs, state departments, professional associations, nonprofits and businesses on topics related to strategy, human resources, organizational development and marketing and communications. Emily writes, speaks, consults and teaches nationally on topics related to strategy, human resources, workforce development and the future of education.



With more than 20 years of experience in education, Stephen Fujii has had many roles from teacher, principal and Operations Director, to HR Director, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. Steve has consulted with districts and communities across the country in setting visions and developing strategic plans. Prior to entering the education profession, Steve served his country as a Combat Arms Officer in the United States Army. Today, Steve serves his community as an elected school board member as the Vice President of the Board.



Taylor Tamang joined EXMI with the goal of fulfilling her dream of making a difference while using her human resources expertise across multiple industries. Her true passion is in diversity, equity and inclusion. Taylor has experience with executive compensation, total rewards, recruiting and retention, leadership, creativity, product innovation, entrepreneurial thinking, data management, persuasive communication and the art of negotiation.

USING INNOVATIVE STAFFING TO BOOST STUDENT SUCCESS, EDUCATOR SATISFACTION

by Sharon Kebschull Barrett, Senior VP for Editorial Services and Communications; Public Impact; Carrboro, NC

Amid bleak news about student learning and teacher shortages, innovative staffing concepts offer hope. But school systems have limited time and funding—how can they ensure a big impact for their efforts?

Several staffing model design elements can boost both student success and teacher satisfaction. While some staffing design efforts accomplish one or two important goals, the best staffing models get results on several fronts and within regular budgets.

Innovative staffing means redesigning instructional and leadership roles, schedules and funding. When staffing is designed well, results include: new career options for educators, higher pay, happy educators, reduced teaching vacancies, increased teacher collaboration and teamwork, paid residencies to attract and support new educators, high-impact tutoring during school for all students and higher-growth student learning.

By reallocating funding from vacancies, existing budgets can pay for these new staffing models. The only limit on positive impact is how fast and well system leaders help schools through their staffing redesign.

Teaching Teams Mean Strong Support, Student Results

Innovative staffing models that have been proven to increase student learning focus on Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL) teams—small teaching teams led by a teacher with a track record of high-growth student learning, for substantially higher pay. The MCL continues to teach students directly in various ways for a portion of each day; leads lesson planning, data analysis, instructional changes and small-group tutoring assignments; coaches team teachers; and co-teaches and models great teaching.

Innovative staffing shouldn't stop with this teacher-leader; other roles on MCL teams include teachers who use rotation strategies to directly teach more students and earn more for doing so. Advanced team teachers may assist MCLs with leadership responsibilities and reach even more students. These roles should increase collaboration and support and expand the teacher career ladder, while boosting teachers' satisfaction.

Multi-Classroom Leader teams get support from existing teacher assistants and the addition of advanced paraprofessionals who provide instructional support, such as tutoring small groups and supporting students on assignments—all with MCL guidance and coaching. Teams may also include paid, yearlong teacher residents to boost districts' internal pipelines. After a year learning under MCLs, residents say they start their careers feeling far more prepared than a typical first-year teacher.

Students gain an extra half-year of learning each year, on average, when taught by teams with combinations of

MCLs and advanced team roles. Research suggests even greater gains are possible with the adoption of a tutoring culture, in which all available adults in the building participate in tutoring led by MCLs. Dr. Scott Muri originally saw innovative staffing models using these roles and specific “Opportunity Culture” design elements in action in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina. He brought them to his first post as superintendent at Spring Branch ISD in Texas and when he became superintendent of Ector County ISD, he made this staffing design a key district strategy, to great effect.

“Coming here, [I] was quickly faced with a significant teacher shortage where 18 percent of our teachers were missing on the first day of school in 2019, and we did not replace a single one,” Muri said. “That’s 356 teacher vacancies day one and subs all year. High quality staffing models, that’s one thing that would help us to reduce the reliance on substitute teachers. And number two, this district needed to improve academically, and high quality staffing models provide a situation in which more students have access to the most effective teachers, and we needed that.”

And third, Muri said, “I wanted opportunities for teachers to spread their wings, and we needed to think differently of the role of the teacher. So once again, high quality staffing models provide a scenario in which teachers get to teach and coach and mentor their peers and really develop themselves and their colleagues to become excellent professionals.”

In August 2022, Muri announced the district’s best recruiting year in over a decade, with the hiring of more than 400 educators, attributing that in part to these innovative staffing changes.

Five Keys to Success

Five principles highlight the elements that, together, can make innovative staffing models a lasting and financially sustainable success. It’s important to have these models be teacher-led, by having each school create a design team of teachers and school leaders that tailor models to address their needs, following the five principles.

1. Reach More Students with Excellent Teachers and Their Teams

The first principle calls for extending the reach of great teachers and their teams to more students. When teaching on an MCL’s team, research shows that teachers boost students’ learning growth into the top 25%, on average.

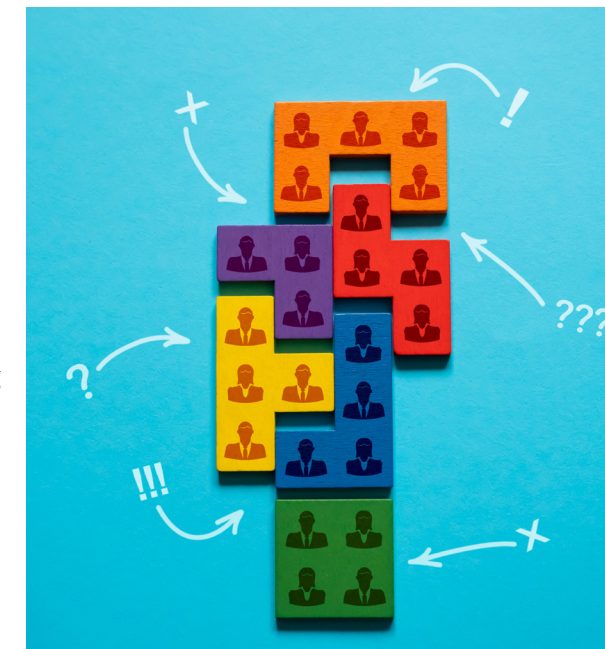
Interviewed when he was superintendent of Vance County Schools in North Carolina, after their first year of implementing MCL teams, Dr. Anthony Jackson said, “We saw an improvement in their outcomes immediately last year in terms of growth of students...and with

the coaching that our MCLs are providing to our teachers and our extended-reach teachers are providing to students, we saw this year an increase in the number of teachers who outperform the state in terms of growth of students.”

In the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County District in North Carolina, this staffing “helps to level the playing field for our students. It ensures that our students are getting high-quality, effective teaching every single day,” said Dr. Timisha Barnes-Jones, assistant superintendent of talent development and school transformation.

2. Pay Teachers More for Extending Their Reach

MCLs should earn more for taking on team



leadership. Today, MCLs earn about 20 percent more than average teacher pay, which, some research suggests, is needed to influence career decisions. Teachers on the team who reach more students should also earn more, and extra pay is typically 3% to 12% for these roles today.

“Our MCLs make more money than our assistant principals and that’s by design, because I want someone to become an assistant principal or principal because they want that job, not to make more money,” Muri said. “And so, people today in our system that desire to be leaders like that have that opportunity, but you’re going to take a pay cut if you are an MCL. And so that has allowed us to keep truly our most effective teachers in the classroom and leading their peers because they are making a significant amount of money. In this state, when you can add other opportunities on top of it such as the Teacher Incentive Allotment, teachers making six figures is a reality today in our organization.”

3. Fund Pay Within Regular Budgets

For sustainability, schools need to fund educator pay supplements through reallocations of regular school budgets. This ensures a permanent structure that benefits students consistently and influences long-term decisions about whether to enter and remain in the profession. Grant funds often cover temporary planning costs and regular professional learning funds can cover training for staff in the new roles.

“It needs to be sustainable within [a school’s] own budget, because in order for this program to stay alive, it can’t rely on grants and things of that nature,” said Dr. Tina Lupton, executive director of professional learning in Winston-Salem/Forsyth.

4. Protect In-School Time for Team Planning and Collaboration

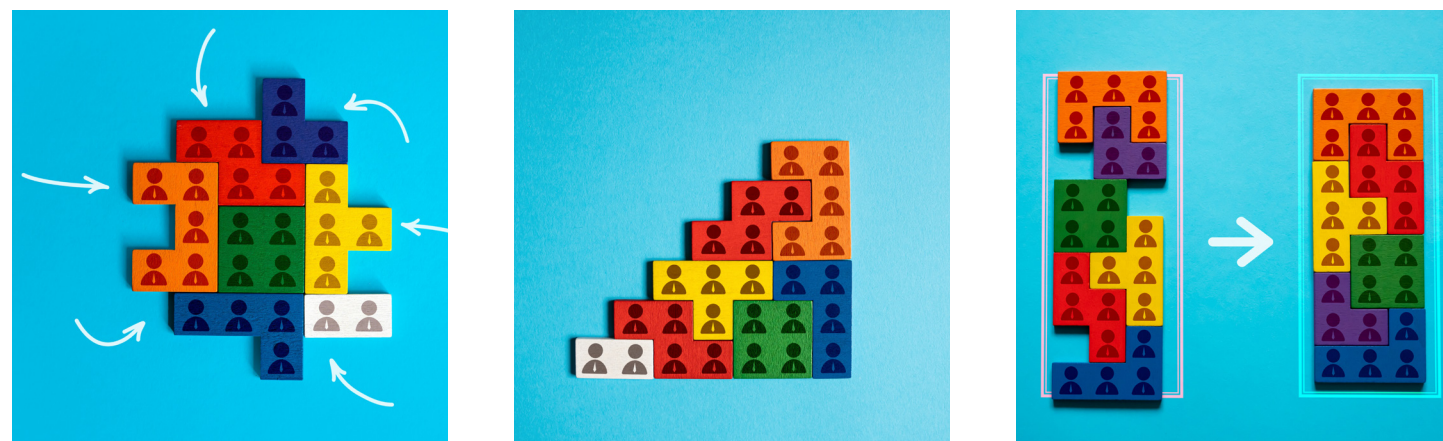
Schools redo schedules so MCL team members have extra time during the school day for individual and team planning and collaboration, with paraprofessional coverage where needed. And they protect educators from extra duties that pull their focus away from student learning growth.

Making that time for collaboration had an effect on filling openings, because teachers saw the support systems schools had in place, said Dr. Valerie Bridges, superintendent of Edgecombe County Public Schools in North Carolina.

“It changes the environment, it changes the way it feels,” she said. “Collaboration and working together is more natural. We see an easier pathway, teachers are more open, teachers feel better if there’s a teacher coming in and giving advice and support.”

5. Match Authority and Accountability to Each Person’s Responsibilities

Unlike traditional instructional coach or facilitator roles, MCLs are held formally accountable for the learning



results of all students they and their team teach. Their job descriptions give them explicit authority to guide instructional methods and materials and to support all team teachers’ success.

Having that “skin in the game” shifts school culture and student achievement, said Robin May, the assistant superintendent of instructional services for Wilson County Schools in North Carolina. “We’ve seen it really tremendously impact our instructional planning, our data analysis and specifically using that data to decide what the next steps are for students.”

With those elements in place, districts see recruitment and retention benefits.

“More kids having access to your very best teachers, that equals greater student gains across the board and so it’s a win for your kids,” Muri said. “And we are concerned now about attracting and retaining and developing, and so this body of work does all of that in one package, and so it’s a huge win for the profession...there aren’t a lot of opportunities or programs that we incorporate in our school environments in which both teachers and students really win and benefit at the same time, and this is one of those things it does. And the last piece is the financial component of this. I’m not buying a multi-million-dollar program; our schools are not having to find \$200,000 to fund this new opportunity—this is a revenue-neutral creative way to think about how to improve outcomes for kids and build and edify your teachers.”



Sharon Kebschull Barrett is Public Impact’s senior vice president for editorial services and communications. Public Impact has over 10 years of experience helping 60 sites—school districts and a few charter networks—in 11 states implement its Opportunity Culture innovative staffing models and analyzing data about what works.

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LEADERSHIP SUSTAINABILITY = STAFF AND STUDENT SUCCESS: 10 TIPS FOR JOB SATISFACTION & RETENTION

by Dr. Mark Benigni, Superintendent;
Meriden Public Schools; Meriden, CT
Dr. Uyi Osunde, Superintendent;
Straford Public Schools; Fairfield County, CT

Whether new to the job or a long-serving administrator - these tips will allow you to build supportive relationships that lead to your students, staff and district's success.



As the state of education remains in flux with ever-increasing candidate shortages and limited search pools of applicants, we have watched educators leave school districts through retirement and work as consultants, college professors and volunteers. While one of us has spent over thirteen years as superintendent in the district and the other just a few years, we both are enjoying our educational journeys, and we want others to know that working in education, while challenging, is still rewarding and, yes, actually fun.

Most importantly, our students, staff, families and communities need positive, passionate, persistent and prepared educational leaders now more than ever as communities are wrestling with economic, mental health and racial challenges.

1. Collaborate with all stakeholders

An age-old adage says, “It takes a village.” When one considers the complexities of leading schools and school districts, it becomes evident that moving toward goals requires community involvement and support. It is equally important that everyone is rowing the boat in the same direction when the village shows up. If 50 percent of stakeholders row in one direction and 50 percent row in the opposite direction, quite logically, you will not advance the academic enterprise. It is a critical skill for leaders to tap into the support systems that exist within the walls of their community or regional area.

Schools must collaborate with community agencies and invested stakeholders, whether welcoming school-based health clinics into their schools for mental health, dental and medical services or extending hours through local community agencies’ after-school and weekend programs. Schools also must provide opportunities for staff professional learning and development and family engagement and support. Your senior citizen population may also open up unique partnerships through student book reading programs, intergenerational spelling bees and technology training days for seniors.

Distributing personal protective equipment was a collaborative community event, with coordination efforts between school districts, mayors’ offices and local health departments. Through these collaborative efforts, districts could get these COVID-19 mitigation resources into the hands of their stakeholders, further improving their ability to provide their students with safer learning environments. Education must leverage these new relationships to support their students and families.

Building buy-in with all stakeholders, especially your staff, will provide the support network

leaders need to navigate the leadership challenges that all educational leaders will face during their tenure.

2. Value your team

A critical and essential skill set for educational leaders, which is sometimes hard to achieve, is putting together a robust and competent team or developing the capacities of an inherited team. This skill is necessary at every level of the academic organization. However, once the team is assembled, it is essential that the leader’s emotional intelligence and social intelligence, or the ability to understand and manage interpersonal relationships, function at a high level. Ruth Wageman et al., in their book: *Senior Leadership Teams: What It Takes to Make Them Great*, as well as Daniel Coyle in *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*, provide some compelling suggestions that can be applied at all levels of the academic organization. A central focus or takeaway from their recommendations is a commitment to psychological safety and coaching for continued development.

The cost of staff turnover is an economic, time and culture drain. Consistency of staff allows district initiatives to take hold and student progress to be supported.

Professional learning for certified and classified staff must

be supported with staff choice and personalization opportunities. It is vital to support the dreams and wishes of your team and find every opportunity to celebrate, laugh and have fun while you are doing it—especially during turbulent times.

3. Innovate

One of the most apparent lessons learned from the pandemic is that we are uniquely positioned (and sometimes required) to think outside the box without a playbook. We are naturally driven, pedagogically, to infuse our students’ cognitive habits into their academic identities to become innovative problem solvers. The pandemic positioned us to do the same. We were tasked to reimagine how we go about “doing school.” Of course, there will always be accountability guardrails that may impact the scope of your innovative practices. However, it would be highly inadvisable and a missed opportunity not to try new things simply out of necessity. For 100 years, public education has had its challenges. Over the last two years, it has become cliché to say, “We cannot go back to what we used to do.” Poignantly, truer words have not been spoken; we know what used to be done did not serve all children. Innovative and abstract thinking that strips the current design of education and re-engineers it in ways that can produce better outcomes for children must be the charge of education leaders everywhere.

So encourage all stakeholders, especially your staff and students, to think outside the box, try new things and dream big. A climate that fosters innovation will keep students and staff excited and engaged. Game-based learning and virtual reality are providing new opportunities for all students. Allow game-based learning to personalize learning, provide immediate student feedback and set individualized goal targets. Embrace virtual reality and put the world in the hands of your students.

Uniquely enough, the constituent group that could give you the best and most creative ideas to celebrate academics is the classroom's individuals—students and teachers. Be sure to tap into that opportunity.

4. Celebrate student & staff success

Sometimes, no news is good news, but we know bad news spreads quickly. Because of the frequency of events, it is easy to celebrate athletics and other extracurricular activities during the school year. However, based on your academic calendar, you have fewer opportunities to celebrate academic success other than at the end of each quarter, trimester, semester, or end of the academic year. School and district leaders must be deliberate in their design to celebrate academic achievement and outcomes to strengthen or enhance their school community's academic culture. Acknowledge student and staff success at Board of Education meetings and through the use of district emails. Use social media to celebrate students and staff and deliver relevant information. Honor students and staff with STAR Performance Rewards for their

progress on standardized testing measures. Look for regular reward opportunities: Model Citizens, You Care-We Care, Community Support and Exemplary Achievement; all are viable options. Partner with your city and maximize the use of city resources such as park signage, downtown banners and city digital billboards to recognize your students and staff.

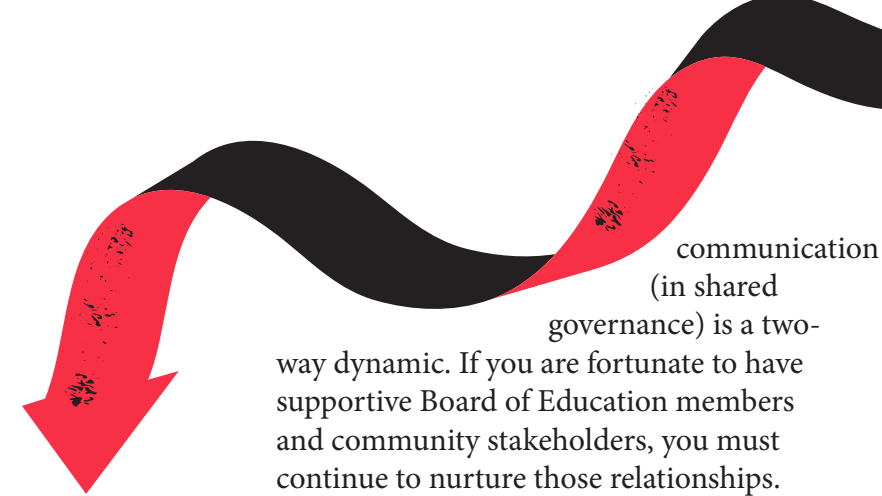
5. Be transparent in all interactions

Knowing who you are and owning that is a crucial attribute of quality leadership. Of course, integrity, ethics and morality should remain your navigation instruments. However, the social-emotional IQ of constituents often find comfort in knowing that their leaders are "human." It is essential always to be honest and open, even when challenges arise or things go wrong. Show them your human side, letting your constituents know we are all fallible from time to time. Empathy is a uniquely galvanizing phenomenon.

Building a climate of trust and transparency with your staff, students, families and the Board of Education is required. Data should be analyzed regularly by subgroups and shared openly with all stakeholders. One of the best ways to be transparent is to insist that district data is shared openly at meetings and on your website.

6. Support Shared Governance

In leadership, it is widely understood and accepted that effective



communication (in shared governance) is a two-way dynamic. If you are fortunate to have supportive Board of Education members and community stakeholders, you must continue to nurture those relationships. Create productive working relationships that foster shared governance. This work is even more critical during turbulent times or when, nationally, a significant amount of educationally charged issues directly impact the district's goals. Communicate often, communicate transparently, emphasize decorum, acknowledge any frustration and remain focused on the bottom line: children.

7. Focus on academic success

While the pandemic required us to focus on the social-emotional needs of our students—and rightfully so—we are still in the business of educating students as academic scholars. Social-emotional learning became a delicate balance for educators who are not all traditionally trained to be responsive, with technical skills, to the social-emotional needs of students. While it continues to ebb and flow, some promising signs indicate that we are on our way out of the pandemic and potentially entering the endemic stage of the global COVID-19 virus experience. Our work must concurrently be centered on data-driven objectives to ensure that our students do not lose three years of academic growth opportunities. We know from pedagogical theory that students learn at different rates. We must continue to keep the bar high and challenge them as scholars. We can use normed assessments to continue setting aspirational targets for our students, staff and ourselves.

8. Provide enrichment opportunities for all learners

If there is such a time to tap into students' interest, the heels of the pandemic are the best time. Learning loss has been the national

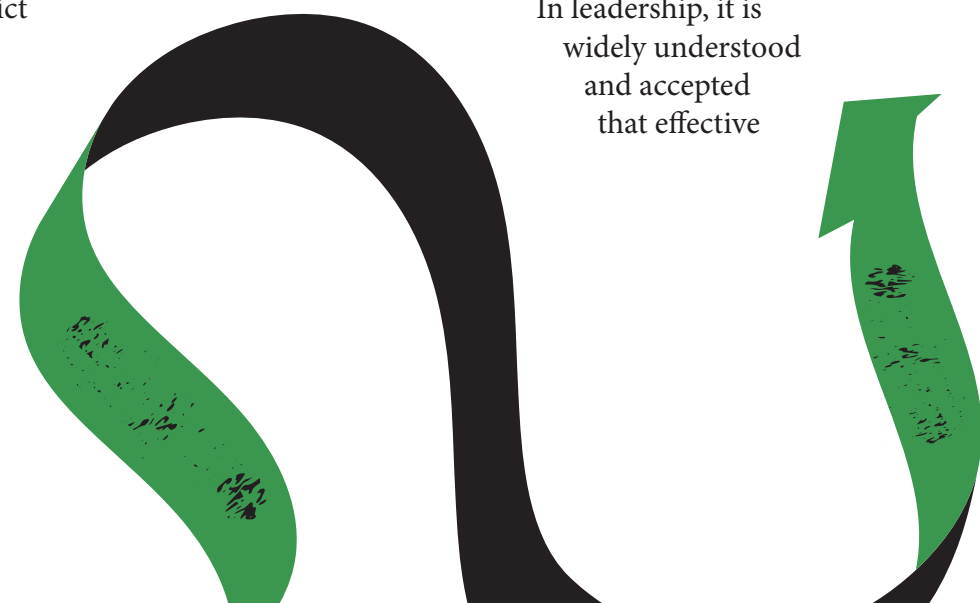
narrative in education for the last three years. With that comes questions about what best engages students intellectually. Offering an eclectic selection of programming rooted in learning standards can serve as supporting strategies that facilitate intellectual transactions for students at a time when the summer slide rears its face. It is recommended that you examine local partnerships as there is often a rich amount of community-based opportunities that can support your enrichment programs.

Districts are increasing summer readiness options and launching enrichment programs that tap into the interest and talents of their students. Students and families have embraced programs in technology, music and athletics. Dedicated teachers and staff members have led the charge as they work side by side with community partners to meet the needs of students.

9. Pursue your passions

As we encourage students to pursue their dreams and search for a career that excites them, we must also provide our dedicated teachers with opportunities to pursue their passions.

It is much harder to pour into people's cups if your cup is empty. As educational leaders, we must continue to pursue what has led us to these leadership opportunities. For us, specifically, that is centered on continued learning. What can we say? We geek out on relevant ongoing personal development! Spending time with colleagues, mentors and the people we work with, discussing the essence of our work and matching plans to meet specific ends drives our passion for what is debatably one of the most challenging professions in the world – being an educator. We are inspired whenever we engage with like-minded professionals, which serves as the gas that fuels our motivation.



10. Develop leaders

Nothing is better than knowing you changed someone's life and left a lasting impact. Beyond the altruistic rewards of positioning people to find success, nothing is more rewarding than helping people fulfill their dreams.

There is an understanding that getting to the professional level in sports is extremely hard. There is a concurrent understanding that it is even harder to stay there once you get there. The same thinking can be applied to school and district success. A way to hedge and create sustainable positive outcomes is through the core component of any enterprise – your people! Many assets come along with this strategy; chief among them is safeguarding proprietary institutional knowledge that drives the processes and morphs cultural dynamics into effective solution-driven collaborations that result in organizational success. Choose wisely and pour into those individuals who demonstrate readiness and capacity.

Too often in education, we are too busy, too committed to the next assignment, too focused on the upcoming task, too driven to cover all the material by the end of the year and too concerned about graduation day to focus on developing your team's leadership capacity.

Let's get to work! Good Luck!!



Dr. Mark Benigni has been an educator for over twenty-five years and is starting his fourteenth year as Superintendent of the Meriden Public Schools. Dr. Benigni served as a teacher, principal, and Mayor of the City of Meriden. The Meriden Public Schools has received awards from CoSN, the Learning Counsel, NSBA, District Administration and Edutopia. He is committed to providing exceptional learning opportunities for all students in the Meriden Public Schools.



Dr. Uyi Osunde is the Superintendent of Schools for the Stratford Public Schools system in Fairfield County, Connecticut. Prior to joining the Stratford Public Schools as its Superintendent, Dr. Osunde held certified roles in multiple Connecticut school districts, including New London, East Hartford, Manchester and Windsor. Dr. Osunde is driven by integrity, strong work ethic, teamwork, equity and all that advances the successful interest of his students, staff and community. Dr. Osunde commits a portion of his time to support the field of educational leadership by mentoring aspiring and early-career school administrators.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL BRANDING: ENHANCING EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

by Tracy Long, Human Resources Generalist;
Keystone Central School District; Mill Hall, PA



Public school branding has emerged as a crucial aspect of education systems worldwide, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions, enhancing student enrollment, fostering community engagement and promoting educational excellence. This article explores the significance of public school branding, discussing its impact on student success, community support and overall educational outcomes. Drawing upon academic research, case studies and industry insights, it highlights the multifaceted benefits of effective branding strategies in public schools and offers recommendations for educational leaders and policymakers to leverage branding as a powerful tool for educational advancement.

Public school branding has evolved from being a mere marketing tool to a vital component of education systems. The concept of branding encompasses the deliberate efforts made by educational institutions to shape their identity, reputation and public perception. By establishing a unique and positive brand image, public schools can communicate their mission, values and educational strengths, ultimately attracting students, building community support and promoting educational excellence. This article delves into the importance of public school branding, exploring its impact on various stakeholders and underscoring the need for educational institutions to invest in strategic branding initiatives.

Importance of Public School Branding:

Effective branding creates a distinct identity for a public school, differentiating it from other educational institutions. A strong brand can positively influence parents' and students' perceptions, generating a sense of trust, credibility and excellence. When parents and students perceive a school as reputable and high-performing, they are more likely to enroll. A well-crafted brand can also help public schools attract students from diverse backgrounds, fostering inclusivity and diversity within the educational environment.

Public school branding serves as a catalyst for building strong connections with the local community. A compelling brand identity creates a sense of pride and ownership among community members, leading

to increased engagement and support. Through effective branding, schools can communicate their values, achievements and community involvement, generating a positive reputation that encourages collaboration, partnerships and volunteerism. Engaged communities contribute to improved educational outcomes, as they actively participate in school activities, fundraising efforts and advocacy for educational initiatives.

Branding can serve as a powerful tool to highlight a public school's educational excellence and innovative practices. By showcasing academic achievements, specialized programs and exceptional faculty, branding efforts can attract talented educators and encourage them to join the institution. Furthermore, branding enables schools to communicate their commitment to continuous improvement and innovation, attracting resources and funding opportunities that support the implementation of cutting-edge teaching methods, technology integration and research-based initiatives.

Public school branding facilitates effective communication between schools, parents and the broader community. Through cohesive branding strategies, schools can streamline their messaging across various communication channels, including websites, social media platforms, newsletters and community events. Clear and consistent branding ensures that stakeholders receive accurate and compelling information about the school's vision, achievements, events and important updates, fostering transparency and trust.

A strong brand identity enables public schools to develop enduring relationships with their alumni. Through effective branding, schools can create an emotional connection with former students, encouraging them to stay connected and contribute to the institution's growth and success. Engaging alumni networks can provide valuable resources, mentorship opportunities and support for current students, while also serving as advocates and ambassadors for the school's brand.

Public school branding has become an indispensable aspect of educational systems, with far-reaching implications for student enrollment, community engagement and educational outcomes. By strategically crafting their brand identity, public schools can shape positive perceptions, attract diverse students, foster community support, promote educational excellence and enhance communication. Educational leaders and policymakers must recognize the importance of branding and allocate resources and expertise to develop robust branding strategies that align with their institution's values and goals. Embracing the power of branding can contribute to the overall advancement of public education, creating thriving learning environments and empowering students to reach their full potential.

Listen to
AASPA's
podcast on
branding!



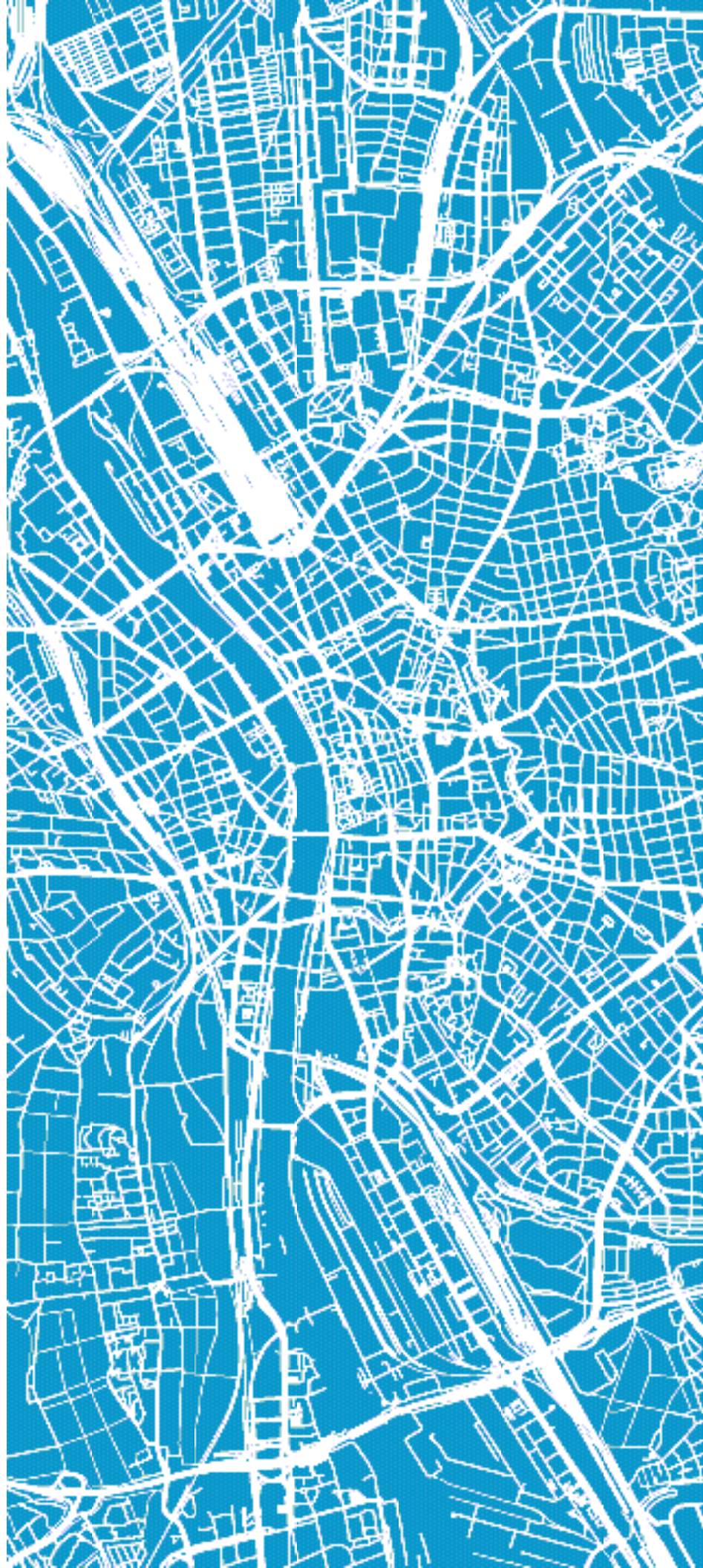
Tracy Long is the human resources generalist for Keystone Central School District. Keystone Central is the largest geographic district in the state of Pennsylvania, covering municipalities in parts of Clinton, Centre and Potter Counties. Within our 970.8 square miles, we have 3,588 students in eight schools, our KCS D Virtual Academy and our KCS D Career and Technical Center. Lock Haven University is located within the district, Lycoming College and Penn State University are in close proximity.

WHAT'S YOUR DEI CALL TO ACTION?

Roadmaps to diversity, equity & inclusion

by Dr. Monica Green, Director of Equity and Diversity;
Omaha Public School District; Omaha, NE
Dr. Bess Sullivan Scott, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership;
Doane University; Lincoln, Nebraska

Your DEI Call to Action - what you do today to create - lives abundant in joy and success for each and every student and adult.



Regardless of where educators stand politically, each educator's focus is to create success in school and success in life for each and every student and adult in their setting. Yet, the lack of support for each and every student and adult manifests daily as attacks on school districts' Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practices escalate. According to Education Week (June 13, 2023), since 2021, 44 states have introduced legislation limiting how educators can discuss racism and sexism, with 18 states successfully putting these bans in place. USA Today (April 5, 2023) cited the Movement Advancement Project's research that in 2023, 46 states have introduced 640 anti-LGBTQ+ bills, with 160 of those being school-specific.

The American Library Association reported that in 2022 a record number of requests, 1,269, were made to censor books and resources. The vast majority of requests addressed books and resources written by or about members of the LGBTQ+ community or by and about Black people, Indigenous people and people of color. In addition to the legislative action, hate groups have been identified in every state. In 2022, the Southern Poverty Law Center tracked 1255 hate/anti-government groups identifying 63 Anti-LGBTQ+, 39 Anti-Muslim, 121 General Hate

and 109 White Nationalist groups whose beliefs and actions are the antithesis of everything schools strive to accomplish in their DEI work. In 2023, the Supreme Court rendered two decisions considered by many to be anti-DEI, the end of Affirmative Action in college entrance decisions and the right of a Christian web designer to deny services to LGBTQ+ customers. In this current anti-DEI environment, if schools are to create success in school and success in life

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now."
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

for each and every student and adult, it is imperative that each educator has clarity about their DEI Call to Action.

What is a DEI Call to Action? The answer is found by adapting a quotation from Stephen Covey (2004) in *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*: "When you engage in work (professional, community, family) that taps your talent and fuels your passion - that

rises out of a great need in the world you feel drawn by conscience to meet - Therein lies your voice, your calling, your soul's code," your DEI Call to Action - what you do today to create lives abundant in joy and success for each and every student and adult.

A DEI Call to Action identifies precisely what you are called to do by conscience to create a school and school district that systematically and systemically understand, identify, then alter bias; that seek, honor and embrace diversity; that create and sustain equitable learning

“So, what’s the problem? The problem is that the balance between talk and action is way off. White people can only unpack their privilege so many times. People of color can only listen to White people share their gradual awakenings to issues of racism and privilege so many times. This is a necessary first step, and I’m sure there are many places where it still needs to happen. But for the rest of us, if we don’t get moving, energy will dissipate, and backlash will begin.”

Jai Mehta

environments; that ensure equity in the highest quality teaching and supports; and develop and sustain a supportive school community for all cultures, exceptionalities, genders, languages, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic status and other underserved or marginalized groups.

Recognize

You begin your journey by recognizing that there are different worldviews. Be aware of your context. Know that your work begins personally, internally - your “Inside Work” and continues institutionally, externally - your “Outside Work.” Be cautious not to get stuck at this stop!

Inside Work

- Have a basic understanding of your history and experiences.
- Have a basic understanding of how you’ve either experienced, benefited, or contributed to systemic barriers.
- Determine where you need to grow. Start there! The work is abundant! You cannot do it all!
- Understand personal barriers to growth.

Outside Work

- Have a basic understanding of history and experiences.
- Determine where you fit. The work is abundant. You cannot do it all!
- Seek to understand barriers and obstacles that exist in your school, district and community.

Why

After you have determined your inside work and or outside work, you must articulate why you are called to do this “inside work” and or “outside work” by connecting your chosen work to a core belief and describing the resulting actions you will take.

Name your core beliefs.

For example:

- Each and every student can and will learn at high levels.
- Each and every teacher must believe that each and every student can and will learn at high levels.
- Instructional rigor implemented skillfully empowers student learning.

Claim a core belief that connects to your identified work by creating an “I believe” declaration.

For example:

- Each and every student can and will learn at high levels.
- Aim your belief by completing your “I believe” declaration with the resulting actions to operationalize that belief to address your inside and or outside work.

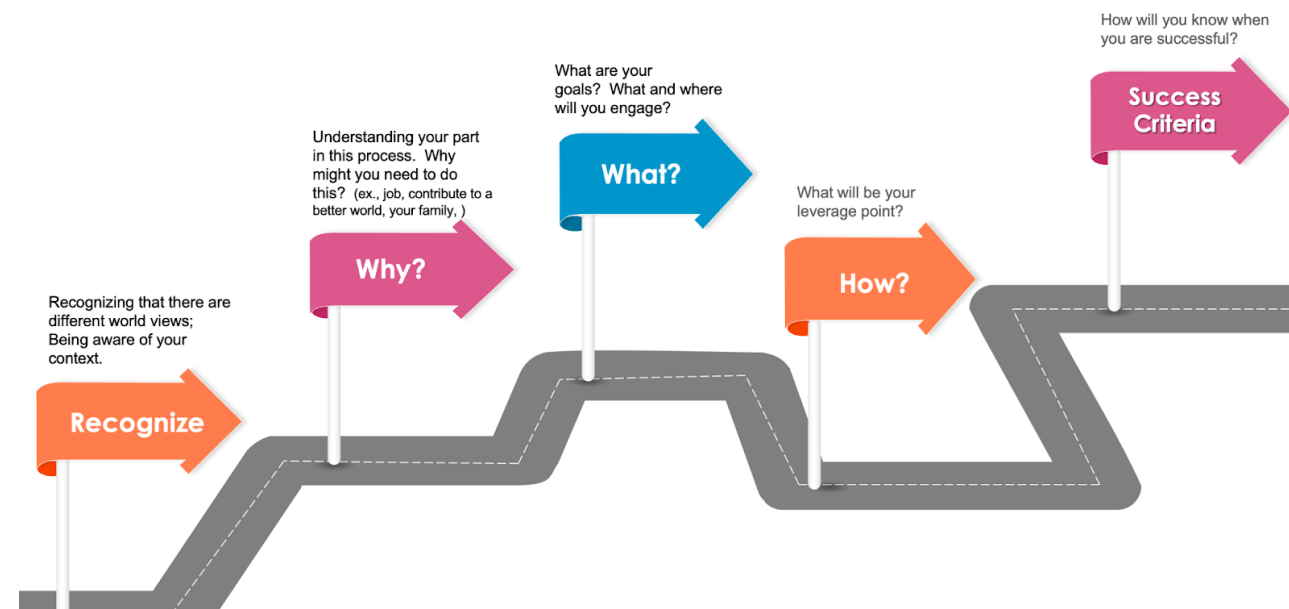
For example:

- I believe students can learn at high levels therefore I will coach teachers on raising instructional rigor in the classroom for all students.

If you are doing this as a team or grade level or department or school or district, you would create “We believe...therefore we...” statements. Keep these “I/We believe...therefore I/We...” statements visible on your phone, in your office and as your computer wallpaper. Visibility of belief and action creates a daily clarity of focus!

What

Your core belief drives your action that connects to the inside or outside work that you are called by conscience to address. Where will this DEI Call to Action roadmap take you? With whom will you travel? What is the destination of this DEI Call to Action roadmap? Naming what your goals are will determine your destination.



Inside Work

- Assess yourself. What is the inside work you need to do to create success in school and success in life for each and every student and adult? How does your “I believe...therefore I...” statement match your identified inside work.
- Understand and grapple with your implicit and explicit bias. How might they be obstacles in your journey?
- Tap and activate your varied life experiences. Reflect on what you learned. Grow. Change. Build resilience.
- Check your beliefs and values. How does your “I believe...therefore I...” statement tell people who you are, what you believe and what you value?
- Find a “journey partner” who can bring different, varied life experiences to grow and support you.
- Now, name your goal, the destination, at this time, on your DEI Call to Action Roadmap.

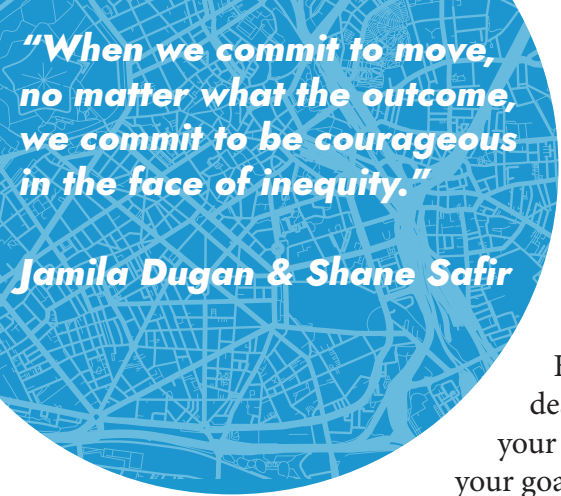
Outside Work

- Assess your team, department, school, district and their work and their systems. What is the outside work you need to do to create success in school and success in life for each and every student and adult? How does your “We believe...therefore we...” statement match your identified inside work.
- Understand and grapple with the implicit and explicit bias of teams, departments, schools and the district. How might unidentified and identified biases be obstacles in your journey?
- Tap, acknowledge, activate and honor the varied life experiences of all members. Listen. Collaborate. Reflect on what you collectively learned. Grow. Change. Build resilience.
- Check the beliefs and values of all members. Create collective beliefs that consider and honor every group member. How does your “We believe...therefore we...” statement tell people who you collectively are, what you collectively believe and what you collectively value?
- Find a “journey partner” who can bring different, varied life experiences to grow and support you.
- Now, collaborate to name your goal, the destination, at this time, on your DEI Call to Action Roadmap.

How

You now know your destination! You’ve named your desired outcome from your action based on your core belief! How might you implement your actions to get you to your desired outcome? What might your leverage point be?

- Identify places within a complex system (a corporation, an economy, a living body, a city, an ecosystem, yourself) where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in something else.
- Leverage your “points of power.” Acknowledge others’ “points of power.” Use your privilege in the communities and systems where you have it!
- Be intentional, not just intuitive. Analyze and reflect on the intersections of information you have gathered on this journey to your DEI Call to Action. Use the context, your I/We believe...there I/we... statement, your desired destination and your goal to be intentional in your actions.



“When we commit to move, no matter what the outcome, we commit to be courageous in the face of inequity.”

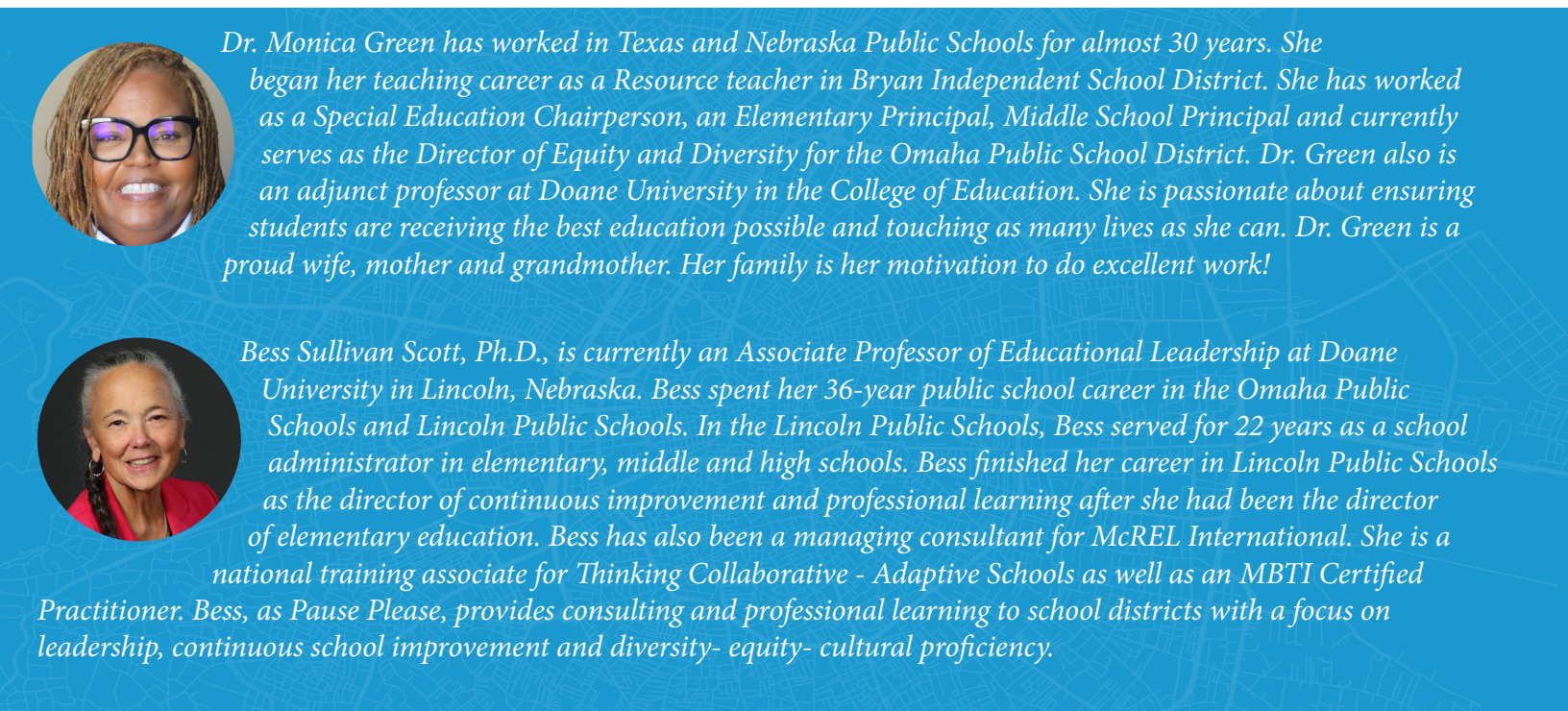
Jamila Dugan & Shane Safir

- Simplify. Be clear and concise. One small step followed by another gets you to your desired destination.
- Act now where you are.
- Prioritize one next step to make a difference.

Success Criteria

How will you know when you have successfully reached your destination? Creating a Theory of Action helps articulate how your identified action will get you to your desired destination (reach your goal) with the desired impact on students and or adults. Success criteria then describe the evidence and the indicators (what it looks like and sounds like) at the desired destination and impact. It is essential to describe the action, the evidence and the quality indicators of success for X, Y and Z. Each action (X, Y) must be implemented at high quality, or the action will not consistently yield the next desired action and desired impact (Z). Often the quality, fidelity and consistency of implementation are not monitored and evaluated; only the desired outcomes and impact on students are monitored and evaluated. This pattern feeds a deficit mindset about which students and adults are capable of what, when the action was not implemented well.

Start with your individual Diversity, Equity Inclusion Call to Action by reflecting on your success criteria daily. It will make a difference! As others join you on this journey, create a team with each member’s Call to Action aligned with your team’s Call to Action. Reflect weekly as a team. If your school is farther along on its DEI journey, encourage your Call to Action team to influence their teams and departments to create a department Call to Action that aligns with the team Call to Action. Consider quarterly check-ins to keep everyone on the journey. Additionally, a schoolwide Call to Action should align with the district’s strategic action plan and should review challenges along with the district’s success criteria. Whatever situation applies, start now! Your community is counting on you to create lives abundant in joy and success for each and every student and adult!



Dr. Monica Green has worked in Texas and Nebraska Public Schools for almost 30 years. She began her teaching career as a Resource teacher in Bryan Independent School District. She has worked as a Special Education Chairperson, an Elementary Principal, Middle School Principal and currently serves as the Director of Equity and Diversity for the Omaha Public School District. Dr. Green also is an adjunct professor at Doane University in the College of Education. She is passionate about ensuring students are receiving the best education possible and touching as many lives as she can. Dr. Green is a proud wife, mother and grandmother. Her family is her motivation to do excellent work!



Bess Sullivan Scott, Ph.D., is currently an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Doane University in Lincoln, Nebraska. Bess spent her 36-year public school career in the Omaha Public Schools and Lincoln Public Schools. In the Lincoln Public Schools, Bess served for 22 years as a school administrator in elementary, middle and high schools. Bess finished her career in Lincoln Public Schools as the director of continuous improvement and professional learning after she had been the director of elementary education. Bess has also been a managing consultant for McREL International. She is a national training associate for Thinking Collaborative - Adaptive Schools as well as an MBTI Certified Practitioner. Bess, as Pause Please, provides consulting and professional learning to school districts with a focus on leadership, continuous school improvement and diversity- equity- cultural proficiency.

AASPA’s 85th Annual Conference

POWER UP!

October 3 - 6, 2023
Anaheim, CA

The American Association of School Personnel Administrators brings school system leaders across the country together for an event that offers unique opportunities for collaboration, professional learning, networking, leadership development and so much more. Annual Conference is an unrivaled opportunity for school leaders to collaborate across all levels to mold the course of district success. From authentic peer-to-peer conversations, innovative learning opportunities and access to world-class thought leaders, you are sure to gain the resources needed to positively impact the lives of students and staff alike.

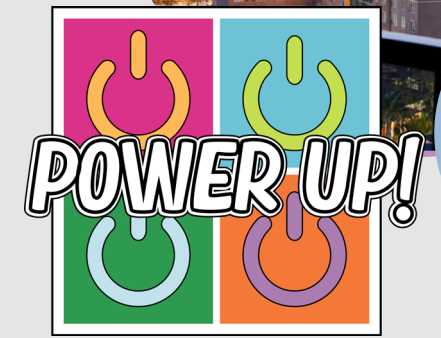
AASPA’s Annual Conference is one of the few—if not the only—places where school HR leaders from around the country can receive the training necessary to address the needs of students and to improve the efficiency of district operations.

At AASPA's 85th Annual Conference you will...

- Hear about the latest research & best practices in the field of PK-12 human capital leadership
- Expand your knowledge & find solutions to your school HR problems
- Discover new business partners & innovative products & services
- Engage in high-level discussions & network with your peers from across the country
- Position yourself as an expert in the field of HR

Who should attend?

- HR Directors
- Superintendents
- Assistant Superintendents
- Personnel Staff
- Principals
- School Administrators
- Business Officials
- And Others!



- **Pre-Conference Sessions***
- **Networking Receptions**
- **Exhibit Hall Access**
- **Meals**
- **Keynote Sessions**
- **Clinics & Ignite Sessions**
- **Session Materials**

All of this starting at \$800 for members and \$1,000 for non-members!

Register Now!

*For pre-conference package registration only

EVENING EVENTS

Welcome Reception

Tuesday, October 3 | 7:00 – 10:00 pm | Tortilla Jo's Downtown Disney

The Welcome Reception will be a great opportunity to meet and network with other conference attendees. Join us in Downtown Disney at Tortilla Jo's for an evening of fun! Grab dinner and a drink as we kick off this year's 85th Annual Conference. Transportation will be provided.



Exhibit Hall Reception

Wednesday, October 4 | 5:00 – 6:00 pm | Anaheim Marriott

You won't want to miss the Exhibit Hall Reception! Grab a drink and some appetizers, chat with our amazing business partners and try your luck at winning some terrific prizes.



Peace, Love & HR

Wednesday, October 4 | 7:00 – 10:00 pm | Brewery X

Looking for a groovy time? Wear your coolest threads, get ready to cut a rug and go bananas with your peers at Brewery X on Wednesday night. Join us at this 70s themed event for dinner, drinks, a live band, karaoke, yard games and more as we celebrate Peace, Love & HR! Transportation will be provided.



Happy Hour

Thursday, October 5 | 4:30 – 6:00 pm | Anaheim Marriott

Join Edustaff, Powerschool, BloomBoard, Clear Concepts Consulting Group and Nimble for a happy hour prior to our evening festivities. Each sponsor will host a station with various light appetizers or drinks. All are welcome to attend.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Reception

Thursday, October 5 | 7:00 – 10:00 pm | Highway 39 Event Center

We invite everyone to join us at Highway 39 Event Center as we celebrate the amazing accomplishments of those who helped "Pave the Way" for diverse educators in the United States. Enjoy dinner, drinks and dancing at this fantastic event. All are welcome and encouraged to attend! Transportation will be provided.



KEYNOTE SPOTLIGHT

LATASHA GILLESPIE

SPONSORED BY TEACHERS of TOMORROW



Latasha has over 25 years of experience with Fortune 50 organizations leading successful global strategic initiatives. She's a creative professional with a background and experience in Leadership, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Finance, HR and 6Sigma. She is exceptionally skilled in Public Speaking, Key Note Addresses and Executive Presentations. Latasha is also committed to coaching, developing and growing others. She is also skilled in driving positive culture change and inclusive environments on a large scale. Latasha is currently responsible for Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Amazon Studios, Prime Video and IMDb.

Wednesday, October 4

STEVE CADIGAN

SPONSORED BY ESS



Thursday, October 5

Steve Cadigan is a highly sought-after talent advisor to leaders and organizations across the globe. Steve advises a wide range of innovative organizations that include Airbnb, Intel, Salesforce, The Country Music Association, Manchester United Football Club and the BBC. He is also regularly retained by some of Silicon Valley's leading VC firms such as Andreessen Horowitz & Sequoia, as well as top Consulting firms like Deloitte & McKinsey. Steve speaks at conferences and teaches in major universities around the world. His work in helping shape the culture at LinkedIn led Stanford University to build a graduate-level class around this ground-breaking work. Throughout his career, the teams, cultures and organizations he has led have been recognized as exceptional, "world-class" performers by the Wall Street Journal and Fortune Magazine.



KARITH FOSTER



Karith Foster is a Diversity Engagement Specialist and creator of the groundbreaking INVERSITY™ methodology and other signature programs. She is creating a seismic shift in diversity and culture change in academic institutions, organizations and corporations across America. These new conversations are revolutionizing the way we address issues of diversity and leadership. Karith brings the perfect blend of humor, knowledge and experience while conveying the ever-present need to address diversity, inclusion and effective communication. Karith leaves her audiences feeling engaged, connected, inspired and encouraged to commit to the journey of mutual respect, acceptance and a greater sense of belonging.

Friday, October 6

EXPLORE ALL THINGS CONFERENCE AT:
<https://www.aaspaconference.com>

Annual Conference has great content and educational sessions. It is always good to leave a conference with real strategies and information that can be implemented in our own organizations!

PRE-CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Immerse Yourself & Learn More - Tuesday, October 3

Go in-depth, learn more and expand your skills in our targeted Pre-Conference Workshops!

Morning Sessions 9 am - 12 pm

- 1. "When You Ain't Got Nobody!" What We Did About It.**
Presented by Susan "Ze" Anderson Brown
- 2. Building the Workforce Our Students Need: Strategic Staffing for Student Defined Success**
Presented by Sara Baker, Sarah Semroc, Cathy Kim, Kellie Hernandez and Michaela Raikes
- 3. What You Don't Know Might Hurt You: Essential Title IX Update for School Personnel Administrators**
Presented by Jackie Gharapour Wernz and Holly McIntush
- 4. A Robust Grow Your Own (GYO) Teacher Cycle: GYO Development, Recruitment & Retention Strategies that Work**
Presented by Leah Zavala, Emily McLarty and Dr. Robert Stewart
- 5. From Conflict to Collaboration: How Conflict Agility Skills Can Build School Capacity and Reduce Leadership Stress**
Presented by Dr. Robert Feisen and Dr. Seth Weitzman
- 6. The Top 10 FMLA Pitfalls to Avoid**
Presented by Mari McGowan and Rebecca Bradley

Afternoon Sessions 1 pm - 4 pm

- 7. Investigations**
Presented by Richard Verstegen
- 8. Organizational Culture & Climate: Creating Communities of Belonging**
Presented by Dr. Erikca Brown
- 9. Overview of Federal Laws**
Presented by Francisco J. Valenzuela
- 10. Power Up Your Retention Strategy**
Presented by Emily Douglas-McNab and Dr. Kate Heynoski
- 11. Gender Identity, EEOC and Related Public Relations Issues**
Presented by Namita Brown, Peter Fagan and Terilyn Finders
- 12. Teacher Shortage? What about the Leadership Shortage and the Data/Research That We Have Discovered in California? Action is Needed Now!**
Presented by David Robertson and Serette Kaminski

*For a complete description of the Pre-Conference Workshops, go to www.aaspaconference.com/pre-conference-sessions

ELITE SPONSORS



AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Tuesday, October 3

- 9:00am - 12:00pm AM Pre-Conference Workshops
- 1:00pm - 4:00pm PM Pre-Conference Workshops
- 4:00pm - 5:00pm Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Meeting
- 5:00pm - 6:00pm First-Time Attendee Reception
- 7:00pm - 10:00pm Welcome Reception at Tortilla Jo's Downtown Disney

Wednesday, October 4

- 8:00am - 9:30am Breakfast, Opening Ceremony & Keynote
- 9:30am - 5:00pm Exhibit Hall Opening (closed during lunch)
- 10:00am - 11:30am Ignite Sessions & Clinic Workshops
- 11:30am - 12:45pm Lunch, Awards, Recognition of Sponsors & 2024 Seattle Presentation
- 1:45pm - 4:15pm Ignite Sessions & Clinic Workshops
- 4:15pm - 5:00pm Regional Meetings
- 5:00pm - 6:00pm Exhibit Hall Reception
- 7:00pm - 10:00pm Peace, Love & HR at Brewery X

Thursday, October 5

- 8:00am - 10:00am President's Breakfast, Business Meeting & Keynote
- 9:30am - 11:45am Exhibit Hall & Consultants' Corner
- 10:45am - 11:45am Ignite Sessions & Clinic Workshops
- 11:45pm - 12:15pm Exhibit Hall Closing, Prize Drawing
- 12:15pm - 1:15pm Lunch on Own or Join ESS/Proximity Learning
- 1:15pm - 4:00pm Clinic Workshops
- 4:30pm - 6:00pm Happy Hour
- 7:00pm - 10:00pm Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Reception at Highway 39 Event Center

Friday, October 6

- 7:30am - 8:30am Breakfast Buffet
- 8:00am - 10:30am Clinic Workshops
- 10:45am - 12:00pm Closing Ceremony & Keynote



Get pHCLE, HRCI & SHRM Credit

This program has been approved for recertification credit through the Human Capital Leaders in Education (pHCLE), the Human Resources Certification Institute (HRCI) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

The use of this seal is not an endorsement by HCLE, HRCI or SHRM of the quality of the program. It means that this program has met HCLE, HRCI and SHRM criteria to be pre-approved for recertification. Certificates will be mailed following the conference.



Register Today at
www.aaspaconference.com

#POWERUP WITH AASPA

5 Tips to Get the Most Out of Conference

by Anna Weber, Marketing Coordinator;
AASPA; Overland Park, KS

I can hardly believe we're only a few weeks away from Conference. I wanted to share some valuable tips and tricks to make sure you get the absolute most out of your Conference experience. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a first time attendee, these strategies will help you #PowerUp in Anaheim.

View Clinic Sessions!

SESSIONS

With over 100 breakouts, pre-conferences and keynotes, it can be overwhelming to choose which sessions will best serve you. Take a minute before you join us to explore all of our sessions and highlight a few that you want to attend. You can use our mobile app to explore all of the sessions and build your schedule for the week. Every session at conference is aligned with the Human Capital Leaders in Education (HCLE) Standards and is eligible for recertification credits from SHRM, HRCI and pHCLE. Our speakers are truly experts in their field, and you're sure to leave Conference full of ideas and strategies to implement in your district. Don't worry if you miss a session you wanted to attend - all of the materials from our clinic sessions will be available in our mobile app.

NETWORKING

One of the highlights of every AASPA conference is the networking opportunities. With five evening events and plenty of built-in networking opportunities during the day, AASPA wants to make sure you have time to form lasting connections that will serve you both personally and professionally after you leave Anaheim. Time and time again, we hear from attendees that one of the biggest benefits of attending Annual Conference is the friendships and connections they have formed at the event. All of our members are truly amazing, and you will have no trouble finding attendees who share your excitement and passion. Make it a goal to leave Conference with at least one new connection. Don't forget to bring plenty of business cards!

*Evening event tickets are included in all of our package registrations.

EXHIBIT HALL

AASPA's Exhibit Hall is full of innovative tools and tech to help your district run more smoothly and give you more time to do the parts of your job you love. I might be biased, but I think our exhibitors are some of the best in the biz and are eager to help. AASPA knows how valuable your time in the exhibit hall is, so our schedule leaves plenty of time for you to visit with over 60 exhibiting companies in two rooms. You also won't want to miss the Exhibit Hall Reception, where you can win some amazing prizes.

UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY

One of my biggest conference tips would be to make sure you utilize the conference app. That's where you'll find a full list of session descriptions, speaker contact info and session handouts. The app also has maps of the venue and our menus for each day. Use the "My

Schedule" function to build your schedule ahead of time and make sure you don't miss any sessions you're looking forward to. You can even add other attendees as friends, share schedules and request appointments.

View Media Toolkit

Also, you'll want to make sure you're ready to connect on social media. You can check out our social media toolkit to find some sample posts and graphics that will let people know you're headed to Anaheim. Connect with other attendees (and AASPA!) by including #PowerUp on your posts.

WEATHER

While the weather in Anaheim in October is pretty warm, it can get chilly in the conference space. Make sure you bring a sweater or jacket with you just in case. While it might not seem like it, you can cover a lot of miles heading between sessions and exploring the exhibit hall, so you definitely want to consider comfortable shoes. Many of our evening events will be outside, so check the weather before you pack.

Our Annual Conference is truly a one of a kind experience and I'm so excited to see all of you in just a few weeks. Our sessions and speakers are incredible, but the connections you make and impact you create are just as important. The community this conference fosters is a very powerful one and I'm always amazed to see the passion you all bring to this event. Make sure you say hi to the AASPA staff!

Get ready to #PowerUp!

View Evening Events

Register Now!



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