

the COMPASS

Direction for HR Leaders in Education

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



Happy New Year AASPA! I often tease my wife and say, "You cannot spell HeRo without HR". Now more than ever, you are counted on to be the HeRoes for your organizations in supporting talent acquisition, development and retention. I look forward to "Celebrating our SuperHeRoes" with you as we gather again for AASPA's 84th Annual Conference October 10-13, 2022 in Orlando, Florida.

With a new year often comes new resolutions. The COVID pandemic has been an exhausting experience for many in our profession, our industry, our staff and our society. This new year, I encourage you to take your pandemic experiences and use them to make a positive impact in your organization. Change the mindset on COVID and use the opportunity to Communicate, Organize, Value, Innovate and Develop.

Communication has always been key within an organization. Make sure that you are leading internal communication for your district and your staff. Along with communication, the need for organization in your department and district is vital. As changes occur, new initiatives are implemented and decisions are made, you can ensure that these projects and strategies are both organized and communicated well. Help your employees understand they are valued and the value that they provide in their positions. Take charge of leading the organization in helping others understand that special value and sharing it with others. Now is the time to innovate. We continue to face shortages of talent, external impacts and constant concerns. We simply can not continue to operate the same way that we always have. Be the spark for positive change and the champion for new ideas. Lastly, develop both yourself and the talent within your organization. Build capacity, continue to learn and help adapt to both current and future needs. If you can manage to include all of these COVID resolutions in your work, you will be a SuperHeRo for your district!

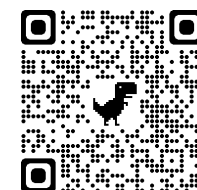
I am excited to share that AASPA is leading the way in addressing the challenges our industry faces through the first ever National Educator Shortage Summit February 7-8, 2022. Multiple education industry stakeholders met to address the challenges of the national shortage of educators and the educator pipeline and share ways to positively impact both their district and national strategy.

Thank you for all you do and for being a SuperHeRo in human resources and in education.

Regards,

Brian White
AASPA President

THE LEON BRADLEY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD is intended for minority college students pursuing a degree in the teaching profession and/or school leadership. The scholarship is named in honor of the late Leon Bradley, the first African American president of AASPA (1983 - 1984).



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HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERSHIP: CENTERING NEW TEACHER SENSE OF BELONGING

by Dr. Neill Alleva, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources,
Katonah-Lewisboro School District, Westchester, NY

Across the nation, districts and schools have been, and will continue to, navigate disruptions wrought by the pandemic to the hiring and retention of teachers. The reasons for teacher shortages are deep-rooted and certainly problematic yet will not be the focus of this article. Instead, the focus here will be on teacher retainment with a special focus on belonging.

As a first-year personnel administrator in a suburban Westchester County, NY district, we felt it was imperative that our attention be channeled to the wholistic well-being of educators. While one could reimagine a host of systems that center teacher well-being, new teacher sense of belonging in our district became the heartbeat of a systematic mid-year check-in.

Thanks to the inspirational work of Shane Safir, Jamila Dugan and Sharon Ravitch, leaders leading through the ongoing crisis of the pandemic must be prepared to answer the “continuous call for transformation.” Said differently, if we are to take teacher retention seriously, then outdated modes of leadership leading to the assumption that our values are perfectly aligned to the lived experiences of individuals must be dismantled and reimaged.

To begin the process of centering new teacher experiences, we began with a stance of humility, keeping in mind that the Latin root for humility is *humilitas*, meaning to stay grounded. By anchoring ourselves to *listening* to new educators with humility, we remained open to their experiences without judgement, even when those experiences don’t align with our perceived impact of the organization.

While Google and Microsoft forms are universally used and overused, every 1st and 2nd year teacher in our district was offered one-on-one time with me to speak about their overall experiences with a special emphasis on their sense of belonging. Inspired by the erudite research of Jessica Nordell, we centered our questions around detecting one’s sense of belonging to an organization. According to Nordell, true belonging to an organization can be uncovered when individuals feel as though they have influence, that they are permitted to make an impact and whether their ideas matter. In other words, by unearthing one’s sense of belonging to an organization, we place ourselves in a position to retain new teachers, vulnerable to leaving our districts or the profession altogether.

Led by the principles of basic qualitative research, new teacher responses were coded with a highlighter to generate themes grounded in their lived experiences. From this approach, dynamic themes emerged that confirmed our values as an organization as well as themes that generated significant opportunities to improve. Thanks to the insight of 1st and 2nd year staff, real, systematic changes to our onboarding process will positively impact the lives of future staff.

While the model can be modified to meet the needs of any district, its true power lies in its ability to respond to the experiences of vulnerable BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ colleagues. Without a grounded and systematic approach to uncovering the experiences of staff, we lean too heavily on our assumptions with the unexamined conclusion all staff experience school and work in identical ways. We know this not to be true.

While the pandemic continues its volatile path upending the lives of untold millions, it has also amplified the importance of *well-being, belonging and human connection*. Arundhati Roy writes that the “pandemic is a portal” granting us a once in a lifetime opportunity to leave behind outdated approaches that cause disconnection and welcome with open arms new and innovative approaches to forging connections. It is thus our charge as human capital leaders to foreground the lived experiences of all individuals and respond to those experiences with humanity and humility.



Dr. Neill Alleva has over 20 years of experience in education and currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources in the Katonah-Lewisboro School District in Westchester, NY. Before his role in human resources, Neill served as an Assistant Principal and Principal in the Mamaroneck School District, also in Westchester, County. Neill earned his doctorate at Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies, with a special focus on Organizational Leadership.

Book Review: Developing the Leader Within You

by John Maxwell

Reviewed by Brian Taylor, Executive Director of Human Resources,
West Islip Union Free District, West Islip, NY

“

The past two years have been difficult to say the least. It doesn't matter what your position is in your school district, your leadership has been challenged. You have probably not only questioned your own abilities. You have questioned your future in education. I know both of those doubts have crept into my own thinking. In times like these you need a reminder of why you do what you do and how best to accomplish your mission as a leader.

Developing the Leader Within You was that reminder for me. Whether you are an aspiring leader, a leader with a few years under your belt or have held leadership positions for decades, this book can provide you with a renewed perspective on why you do what you do and how to do it better. John Maxwell takes the perspectives of leaders from all walks of life and provides his own fresh insights to inspire you to not just manage your organization but lead your people.

The underlying premise of the book is that influence is the cornerstone of leadership. You cannot be a leader without followers. You cannot have followers if you don't have influence. To gain influence you must “communicate effectively. This leads to recognition and recognition in turn leads to influence”. The chapters in the book provide you with awareness into the ideas that help you grow your influence with your followers.

These ideas resonated with me the most:

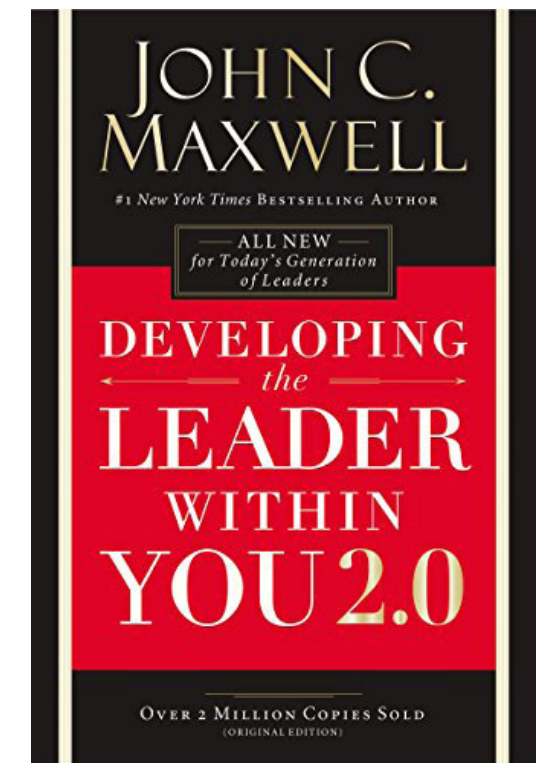
- **Priorities** – During the pandemic our priorities have been skewed to fighting fires rather than furthering our mission. This chapter was a great reminder that we have to set our own priorities and not let them be influenced by outside forces. “All good leaders have learned to say no to the good in order to say yes to the best.”
- **Integrity** – We have all had to make difficult, often unpopular decisions, during the pandemic. Integrity is what leads us all to make those difficult decision for the greater good, even in the face of severe criticism. “The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he would never be found out. – Thomas Macauley.”

- **Creating Positive Change** – Things have changed over the last two years. We were forced into making changes that we may not have made without the situation at hand. One of the biggest issues in education is the snail's pace at which positive change occurs. We have to learn from the recent past to continue moving education forward without being forced to by our circumstances. “Elbert Hubbard said that the greatest mistake a person can make is to be afraid of making one.”
- **Problem Solving** – There has never been a more important skill right now. Problems are thrust upon us on a daily basis. Problems that demand solutions. As leaders it is our responsibility to empower others to solve problems for themselves. “Problems should be solved at the lowest level possible, because that is where they appear.”
- **Attitude** – There is an old saying that attitude will determine your altitude. Moping, whining, crying out about the unfairness of things will not solve the problem at hand. It will only make you feel worse, and you still have to deal with whatever you are going through. “God chooses what we go through. We choose how we go through it.”

This book gave me a renewed understanding of why I do what I do and how I can do it better. I got into education to make a difference in the lives of young people. They, more than any of us, have struggled to find their footing through these challenging times. We must always remember that every decision that we make has a direct impact on the students. Therefore it is imperative that we recapture our why and push forward with helping our children become good citizens of this challenging world.

*To read the full review of *Developing the Leader Within You* reviewed by Brian Taylor, visit <https://www.aaspa.org/news/blog>

To order your copy of *Developing the Leader Within You*, visit [aaspa.org/products/featured-books](https://www.aaspa.org/products/featured-books)

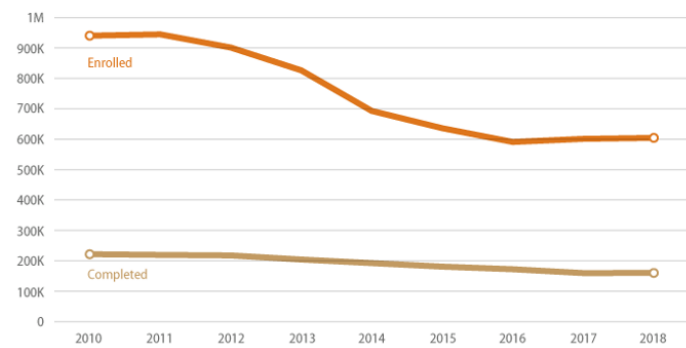


EDUCATOR SHORTAGE: MOVING BEYOND THE CONVERSATION

by Dr. April Buschelman, Certification Officer, Creighton University, Omaha, NE, Ms. Jenny Jansky, Certification Officer, University of Nebraska, Kearney, NE & Dr. Sara Skretta, Certification Officer, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Classrooms with no teachers. Low numbers of qualified applicants for all education jobs. Declining enrollment in educator preparation programs. This is the new reality in education across the country, posing significant challenges for districts to ensure students have quality educational opportunities. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education reports that 30% of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. As seen in Figure 1, enrollment in teacher preparation programs across the country has been declining over the past several years. Nationally, between 2010 and 2018, there has been a 35% decrease in people enrolling in teacher preparation programs. In Nebraska, there was an even larger decline of about 45%. This in itself is worrisome, yet when looking closer, the number of program completers is declining as well.

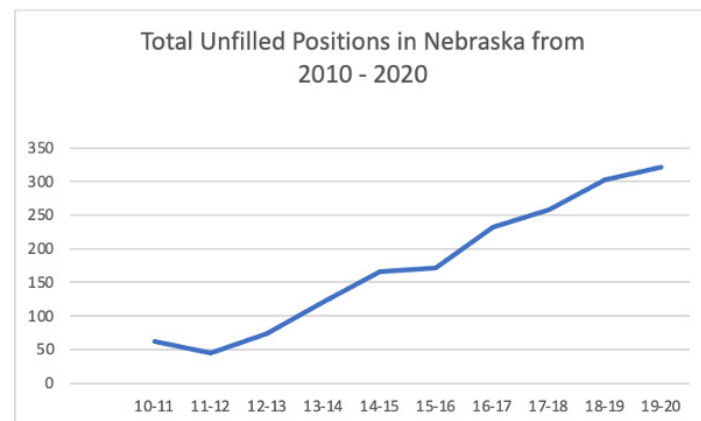
Figure 1
Both enrollment in and completion of teacher preparation programs have fallen
Teacher preparation program enrollment and completion by year, 2010-2018



Note: This figure was produced in 2019 by the Center for American Progress utilizing data from the U.S. Department of Education, "Title II Reports." Original image is from "What to make of declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs" by L. Partelow.

When diving deeper into the state specific data, Figure 2 shows Nebraska's trend of unfilled positions (filled by someone other than a fully qualified teacher or left vacant) is reaching a crisis point, with an increase of nearly 300 unfilled positions over the past eight years.

Figure 2
Note: Data was compiled by Buschelman, A. (2021) using the Nebraska Department of Education's annual Teacher Shortage Survey results.



This story, as told by the numbers, compelled the Nebraska Association of Colleges for Teaching Education (NACTE) into action to unify educators and supporting groups on the issue of educator shortage. The result was the first Nebraska Educator Shortage Summit, a full day of interactive conversation with the goals of identifying barriers and challenges, sharing initiatives and strategies currently in place and establishing top priorities and action plans for the state through active dialogue as the first step in reversing educator shortage trends and keeping Nebraska schools staffed with qualified educators.

The Summit

NACTE was uniquely positioned to coordinate the initial statewide discussion as its membership, the 16 educator preparation programs in Nebraska, partner with PK-12 schools, deliver teacher preparation for the state and work with the Nebraska Department of Education on policy and rule. With the help of a national AACTE grant and funding from local partners, NACTE hosted nearly 100 educational leaders and stakeholders at the Summit. Attendees included teachers and administrators, personnel from the Educational Service Units and representatives from the Nebraska Association of School Boards, Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska Department of Education, educator preparation programs and the State Board of Education.

Attendees were assigned to tables based on their role so each group had multiple perspectives, from rural to urban, public to private and large school to small school, to enhance the work and conversation. AASPA Executive Director, Kelly Coash-Johnson, painted the full picture of the national educator shortage issue, including reasons behind the shortage: declining interest, reduced enrollment, teacher retention/turnover and teacher salaries. She also shared potential strategies to reverse the trends, which included the importance of embracing data, grow your own teacher and leader programs and communicating the district brand.

Following the national data presentation, Nebraska specific shortage data was shared, gathered by NACTE primarily from the Nebraska Department of Education's annual Teacher Shortage Survey. This data included general information, trend data for individual endorsement areas and geographic regions and causes for unfilled positions. With the data validating the current crisis, Summit participants shared their stories and got to work.

The first interactive work session tasked each group to identify barriers and challenges that currently prevent schools from filling positions. Inputs varied from not having any applicants, a lack of housing in some communities, certification issues and class size, among others. The second session provided opportunities for individuals to identify successful strategies or initiatives that were working or being implemented in their schools. Participants shared successes, learned from colleagues and discussed potential collaborations. Nebraska districts are implementing an assortment of strategies, including variations of grow your own programs, providing housing and awarding funding to student teachers.

The final session began moving the work forward with each group identifying solutions and innovations to the barriers and challenges identified in the first session. As part of this discussion, each group generated their top five barriers/challenges. Participant groups were combined to create larger discussion groups, which reviewed their priority lists, modified items and/or their order and created new priorities listed in one of four categories (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Most Critical; Easiest to Implement	Most Critical; Most Difficult to Implement
Least Critical; Easiest to Implement	Least Critical; Most Difficult to Implement

Discussion groups shared their top five priority areas with Summit participants and it should be noted that each group, composed of different perspectives, identified similar areas or variations of the same areas, as priority items. The priority areas included certification, marketing and elevating the profession, Praxis Core (state testing requirements) and recruitment and retention. Task forces were subsequently formed in these areas and more than half of Summit attendees volunteered to be members of multiple task forces. Task Force membership continues to grow, expanding to the members of the educational community who were unable to attend the Summit, but who want to be part of the solution.

Next Steps

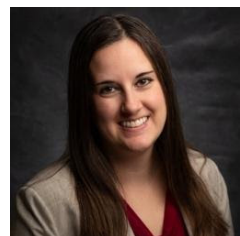
The element that differentiates the Summit from other conversations on educator shortage is the expectation of deliverables. Task forces are currently meeting and must have a minimum of two meetings this semester to develop action plans around their area of focus. No specific guidance on the elements of the action plan were provided to enable each task force the autonomy to develop plans tailored to the identified challenge, barrier or issue. Plans may include everything from localized efforts to statewide initiatives to organized legislative advocacy. In the summer of 2022, task forces will submit their action plans and NACTE will compile

the information into a comprehensive report to share with Nebraska educational stakeholders at various events like Nebraska Administrator Days.

Gathering Momentum & Progress

Since the Summit, the Nebraska educational community's dedication to solving educator shortage has gained significant momentum. NACTE representatives have shared information with the State Board of Education and been invited to continue the discussion with a number of educational groups and state legislators who are interested in the work being done. Educator shortage is an issue that Nebraska not only identifies as a priority but one where the state has moved beyond just discussion. We are actively and strategically developing innovations and strategies to take action and reverse the trends.

While NACTE spearheaded the P-20 conversation with the Summit, the valuable, collaborative partnerships that Nebraska education stakeholder groups enjoy, have already shown benefits for our education agencies. Nebraska educators, educator preparation programs, state agencies, supporting organizations and P-12 schools are working together to create a positive trajectory for education and eliminate teacher shortage because it is what our children deserve.



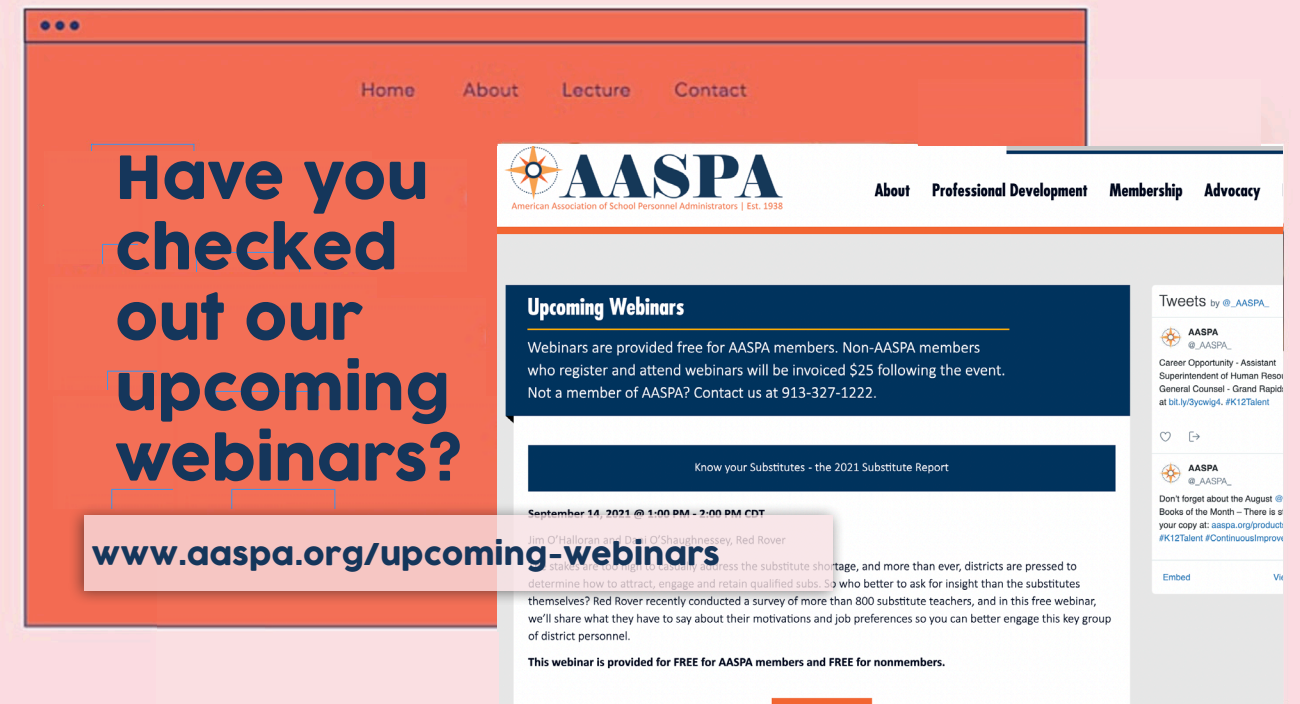
Within the Education Department, Dr. Buschelman coordinates the field placements for teacher prep students and handles all state certifications of Creighton's teacher education, educational leadership and school counseling programs. Dr. Buschelman also teaches education courses to both graduate and undergraduate students, provides Safe Environment Training for the Archdiocese of Omaha and serves as President of the Nebraska Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.



Jenny Jansky is the Director of Educator Certification at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Jansky has been a member of the UNK staff since 2007. Her primary responsibility is management of the UNK Educator Certification Office, which serves as a resource center for future educators. It assists them as they apply and gain admission to the Teacher Education program, are placed in student teaching assignments and apply for certification.



Dr. Sara Skretta is currently the Certification Officer at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Co-Chair AASPA Leon Bradley Scholarship Committee. Dr. Skretta has had many roles in her career – teacher, assistant principal, national co-author, Director of Human Resources, HR Partner for Employee Relations and Director of Professional Experiences. She has worked in the public and private sector in both for-profit and non-profit entities.



AASPA IS NOW ACCEPTING ARTICLES FOR THE 2022 BEST PRACTICES MAGAZINE. THE ANNUAL PUBLICATION FEATURES ARTICLES FROM MEMBERS ON STRATEGIES OR PROGRAMS ON A PARTICULAR TOPIC. AASPA'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HAS CHOSEN "EDUCATOR SHORTAGE" AS THE THEME FOR THE 2022 ISSUE.

POSSIBLE TOPIC IDEAS COULD INCLUDE ARTICLES ON:

- EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT TACTICS
- GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS
- EDUCATOR RETENTION PLANS
- ONBOARDING PROGRAMS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH AASPA MEMBERS ACROSS THE WORLD, PLEASE CONSIDER SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE. ARTICLES SHOULD BE EMAILED TO MORGAN@AASPA.ORG BY APRIL 8, 2022.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR A COPY OF THE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES, PLEASE EMAIL MORGAN@AASPA.ORG

THE CROWN ACT AND ROOTING OUT RACE-BASED HAIR DISCRIMINATION

by Deena R. Merlen, Esq., Partner,
Reavis Page Jump LLP, New York, NY

The program on June 7, 2019, was titled, “The Secrets to Unleashing NextGen Talent.” The gorgeous hall at the Yale Club bristled with heavies from companies and organizations such as Facebook, Google, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Ernst & Young, Wells Fargo, SHRM and more.

Thasunda Brown Duckett was a riveting speaker. Aptly named “Most Powerful Woman in Banking” by *American Banker*, Ms. Duckett, who at the time was CEO of Chase Consumer Banking, oversaw a banking network with more than \$684 Billion in deposits and investments, 5,300 branches, 18,000 ATMs and **more than 47,000 employees** – including 3,000 financial advisors – serving 23 million households nationwide. This was before she moved to her current gig as the CEO of TIAA, where she is one of only two Black women currently leading a Fortune 500 company, and the fourth Black woman, ever, to serve as a Fortune 500 CEO.

“Time for two more questions,” said moderator Tyler Mathisen, co-anchor of CNBC’s “Power Lunch.” Two lucky women got to pose the final questions.

And what did they ask the Most Powerful Woman in Banking?

How to...wear their hair?

A Caucasian man, without much hair at all, cracked a joke, but Ms. Duckett addressed their questions with all due seriousness, for it is indeed a serious matter. Dress code policies, including with respect to hair, can have racially discriminatory impact and can perpetuate racism – and indeed they have, for far too many, for far too long.

While the discussion with Ms. Duckett related to grooming and dress code policies in the workplace, and this is certainly something that human resource professionals in schools must focus upon in regard to faculty and staff, consider the profound harm to students subjected to racially discriminatory grooming and dress code policies and expectations.

As noted in the New York City Commission on Human Rights Legal Enforcement Guidance on Race Discrimination on the Basis of Hair:

There is a widespread and fundamentally racist belief that Black hairstyles are not suited for formal settings, and may be unhygienic, messy, disruptive or unkempt. Indeed, White slave traders initially described African hair and locs as “dreadful,” which led to the commonly-used term “dreadlocks.” Black children and adults, from schools to places of employment, have routinely been targeted by discriminatory hair policies.

Race discrimination based on hair and hairstyles most closely associated with Black people has caused significant physical and psychological harm to those who wish to maintain natural hair or specific hairstyles, but are forced to choose between their livelihood or education and their cultural identity and/or hair health. Due to repeat manipulation or chemically-based styling (i.e., using straighteners or relaxing hair from its natural state), Black hair may become vulnerable to breakage and loss and the development of conditions such as trichorrhexis nodosa and traction alopecia. In some cases, altering hair from its natural form by way of repeat manipulation or chemically-based styling may also expose individuals to risk of severe skin and scalp damage. Medical harm may also extend beyond the skin or scalp.



Black people with tightly-coiled or tightly-curved hair textures face significant socioeconomic pressure to straighten or relax their hair to conform to White and European standards of beauty, which can cause emotional distress, including dignitary and stigmatic harms. Because of these expectations, in addition to the physical harms noted above, Black people are more likely than White people to spend more time on their hair, spend more money on professional styling appointments and products and experience anxiety related to hair. These experiences highlight the unique and heavy burden and personal investment involved in decision-making around hair for Black communities, and the consequences of being compelled to style one’s hair according to White and European beauty standards or be stigmatized for wearing one’s hair in a natural style.

The issue of hair discrimination has gained traction nationally and is trending. Numerous states and municipalities have now enacted the CROWN Act (which stands for “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair”) or similar legislation. Under most of these laws, the CROWN Act has been

implemented by clarifying that existing anti-discrimination laws, which prohibit discrimination based on race, are to be understood to include ethnic traits historically associated with race and that these include hair texture and protective hairstyles. There is some variation in the wording of the laws from state to state, but as a general matter, they typically convey the understanding that “protective hairstyles” include such styles as braids, cornrows, locs, twists, bantu knots, afros and so on.

You may recall hearing about a mixed-race high school athlete who was forced to choose between having his dreadlocks forcibly cut off, then and there, or forfeit his wrestling match at a competition in New Jersey in 2018. On the one year anniversary of that wrestling match, the governor of New Jersey signed the CROWN Act into law, the 3rd of the 13 states that have now enacted the CROWN Act or similar legislation.

In addition to those 13 states, such legislation has been introduced and is pending in nine more states. More is expected to follow. Moreover, 29 cities and counties have enacted such laws where the states have not yet

acted on a state-wide basis. Notably, bills to enact a federal version of the CROWN Act have been introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate and are under consideration. And, in what may be the first lawsuit brought under the CROWN Act, just over two months ago an employee filed a lawsuit in California for race-based discrimination after his employer allegedly told him he must cut off his dreadlocks to be hired for a position.

School human resources personnel should carefully review their workplace policies, standards and expectations that relate to appearance and professionalism to be sure they are inclusive and do not have a racially discriminatory impact. Similarly, teachers and school counselors should never expressly or implicitly convey to students that natural hair or hairstyles commonly associated with Black communities are unprofessional, messy or otherwise unsuitable in any way. Regardless of whether your school is in a location that has enacted the aptly-named CROWN Act (“Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair”), race-associated hair discrimination clearly needs to be rooted out and cut off.

In her employment practice, Ms. Merlen is a trusted “go to” problem solver and counsel to individuals, established name brand companies and startups alike. She has extensive experience representing clients in matters including general counseling, discrimination actions, mediations and dispute resolution, investigations by federal or state agencies, as well as wage and hour claims and other labor law matters. Representative clients include technology companies, schools and other academic institutions, personal care and beauty companies, fashion and design companies, media, arts and entertainment companies, wholesales, retailers and more.

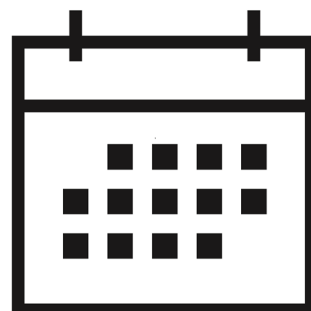


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Upcoming AASPA Events



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION SUMMIT
April 28-29, 2022 | Chicago, IL

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR BOOT CAMP
June 23-24, 2022 | Minneapolis, MN



ANNUAL CONFERENCE
October 10-13, 2022 | Orlando, FL



Register and learn more at aaspa.org/events

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EMPOWERING EXCEPTIONAL LEADERS

by Brian Murphy, Transformational Leader of Strategic Management, Kristin Kaser, Grant Manager & Jolene Winston, Project Manager, Toledo Public Schools, Toledo, OH

The selection, development and retention of current and future leaders is vital to a district's health and ongoing success. Getting the right people with the right skills in the right positions and ensuring they have the right support to be successful is fundamentally much more difficult than it sounds. Yet, through bold leadership and transformational change, districts can lead the way when it comes to ensuring equity by developing comprehensive principal pipeline programs that involve strategically aligned leadership development programs, professional learning, mechanisms for feedback, mentoring and more.

Growing Great Leaders

In 1998, TPS leadership realized that the most promising path to finding building leaders was to grow them. Previously, the district focused on recruiting external candidates for open leadership positions and a similar pattern emerged. Many external hires were either unsuccessful or stayed with the district a short time as successful new leaders were hired away by nearby suburban districts. TPS believed it made more sense to invest in current employees since they were already invested in the students and were familiar with the district and its culture. This drove TPS to start the Urban Leadership Development Program (UDLP) to develop exceptional teachers into building administrators and supervisors. Today, UDLP exists as a partnership between the district, the Toledo Association of Administrative Personnel (TAAP) and Bowling Green State University (BGSU). ULDP fast-tracks teachers and unlicensed administrators into school leadership positions. The performance-based application process has about a 50% acceptance rate. Those who wish to apply must have five years teaching experience in the district, have completed the Ohio Resident Educator licensure program and have no negative evaluations. As part of the selection process, educators must go through interviews and complete mock leadership performance tasks.

TPS staff and professors at BGSU provide instruction for ULDP, which purposefully prepares individuals to lead in an urban setting. Participants earn a master's degree in education administration or education specialist degree. Upon completing the program, ULDP participants must make a five-year commitment to TPS.

ULDP has a 98.5% completion rate as special supports are put in place to ensure every ULDP participant gets the help they need along the way. While in the program, participants may have an opportunity to act in various administrative roles. These individuals are then given a preferred interview spot after they graduate. This grow-your-own program has netted many positive results for the district. To date, there have been 142 graduates with roughly 96% of the graduates being promoted into an administrative position. Even the TPS Superintendent, Dr. Durant, is a graduate of ULDP.

While having a teacher to principal pipeline is important, one of the biggest outcomes has been increased leader diversity. TPS is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion for both students and staff and is working to integrate these principles into all programs, processes, policies and operations. Additionally, it is the goal of the district to assure that all who are employed are provided with the necessary resources to be successful. The district knows that to meet the needs of diverse students, the district needs to employ individuals from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, class or ability.



As a result of this program, 35% of TPS administrators are minorities and 61% are women, as compared to 23% and 54% nationally.

Reviews of the program are positive and most participants note that the support structures formed are just as important as the learning. Kristin Kaser was a teacher leader when she applied for and was selected into the ULDP program. She noted that, “one of the things I appreciated most about my ULDP experience was the actual cohort of colleagues. We learned together and we learned from one another. We brought challenges and questions from our daily experiences on the job and problem-solved together during our coursework sessions.” Since graduating from the program in 2015, Mrs. Kaser has been part of the leadership team in the Human Resources Department. Her cohort is now dispersed across the district in a variety of leadership positions yet, “We still assist one another regularly. We're just a phone call or email away.”

Mentoring & Coaching Support: Administrative Performance Program

In an effort to increase support for principals throughout all stages of their career with TPS, the district launched the Administrative Performance Program in 2017. The program not only provides support to all first-year district leaders, but also other administrators who have been identified as benefiting from additional training and mentoring. High-performing principals mentor new and struggling principals after specialized training to prepare them for this role. This ensures a structured, systemic and effective implementation of the mentoring program. Mentors conduct on-site visits, provide formal and informal feedback and share relevant resources. For veteran administrators needing intervention, mentors provide intensive, job-embedded support on goals listed in their improvement plans.

Professional Development: Instructional Leadership Development

While districts tend to have many options for professional development, implementing the learning is much more difficult. Thus, when selecting professional development for building leaders, TPS searched for a curriculum that bridged research with practice. TPS wanted a professional learning experience that leveraged successful andragogy and knowledge transfer of best practices. David Manley, Director of the TAAP Leadership Academy, describes the goal of the program as to “provide professional learning opportunities for our administrators so they not only grow as a leader, but also as an instructional leader.” The learning is aligned to the Ohio Standards for Principals and focuses on inclusive leadership competencies to improve results for all students, including those with learning disabilities or difficulties. Craig Otterson, Principal of East Broadway Elementary, noted that such learning has not only “taught me how to become a more technical instructional leader. I have not only learned how to communicate the data to my teachers, but to lead them on how to increase their instruction from what the data is telling us.”

Teacher and School Leader Grant Allows for Innovation and Continued Improvement

While TPS has made great strides towards creating a principal pipeline and comprehensive system of support, there is still room for improvement. The next phase of the journey will be aided by a Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Fund grant, which they were awarded in October 2020 from the U.S. Department of Education. Grant funds will be used to invest in and improve all parts of the district's human capital management system. Specifically, efforts are focused on attracting and retaining highly skilled and high-performing staff; creating a comprehensive repository for professional development; and investing in HR staff development with the pHCLE 2.0 program.

Emilio Ramirez, President of the TAAP shared support for the work ahead. “Although leaders and teachers already work extremely hard to promote student success, TSL will allow the district to expand their human capital management system work and reward excellent educators. I believe that this program will encourage leaders to strengthen their commitment to helping all students reach their potential in preparation for college and career.”

Lessons Learned

In reflecting back on their journey to empower principals to lead schoolwide improvement and foster an inclusive learning environment, TPS identified five core tenets that they learned along the way.

1. **Strategy is more than a strategic plan.** The district’s first step toward improvement was to build a new strategic plan. This work involved various stakeholders whose feedback informed the development of the strategic plan’s six goals. Through scorecards and metrics, TPS has become purposeful in how they design and align everything from curriculum and instruction to people processes, customer service and organization culture. TPS has learned that strategy deployment is more than a strategic plan. All work must be aligned to a common purpose to avoid confusion between competing values, priorities and programs.
2. **Supported principals are empowered principals.** A pipeline program that gets people in the door of a school building isn’t enough. Empowering principals means ensuring they are supported throughout their career.
3. **Recognize greatness.** Ensuring exceptional leaders are highlighted and celebrated is important in a culture that values individuals for innovation and high performance. Recognition programs need to be intentionally designed. They must also be monitored to ensure the right behaviors are being rewarded and assessed for adverse impact.
4. **It can’t just be any PD, it has to be the right PD.** Leadership development shouldn’t be looked at as one-off education events. Learning needs to be job-embedded, supported by coaches and tailored to meet individual needs.
5. **When inclusive practices are prioritized, everyone benefits.** TPS believes that when employees are provided access to growth opportunities, quality working conditions, a supportive leader, equitable and fair pay and an experience that creates a sense of belonging, students and communities benefit. Inclusivity can only be achieved when programs are purposefully designed and continuously monitored and improved.



Brian Murphy, M.Ed., pHCLE
Brian is the Transformational Leader of Strategic Management for Toledo Public Schools (TPS) in Toledo, Ohio. Brian has over 20 years of leadership experience in urban public education. Currently, Brian is currently the executive champion of the TPS Teacher and School Leader Incentive grant.



Kristin Kaser, MAT, Ed.S., pHCLE
Kristin is currently the Grant Manager of the Teacher and School Leader Incentive grant for TPS. She spent 20 years teaching elementary and middle school students before moving into administration. On the TSL grant team, Kristin ensures individuals at all levels across the organization are actively participating in grant activities ranging from the design of performance-based compensation to the building of diverse educator pipelines.



Jolene Winston, MBA
Jolene is currently the Project Manager of the Teacher and School Leader Incentive grant for TPS. Over her 13 years at TPS, Jolene has supported or managed projects specific to finance, payroll and HR technology implementations. On the TSL grant team, Jolene ensures all projects are communicated with USDOE, occurring on time, within budget and providing exceptional results to employees and students.

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GETTING CREATIVE AND GETTING BUSY

As states continue navigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government allocated the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Programs (ESSER) and American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to local education agencies to respond to emergent needs in schools and communities. The U.S. Department of Education supports local education agencies' use of ESSER and ARP funds to plan or support existing programs and initiatives that restabilize and diversify the educator workforce, including rebuilding the educator pipeline.

AASPA asked our members **“What are some creative ways you are using relief funds to support Recruitment and Retention in your district?”**

We used a bulk of our funds to hold a summer enrichment program for elementary students. Most of the employees who supported the program were current teachers and teacher associates. This opportunity gave one teacher who has an administrator license the ability to get some administrative-type experience, as he was the on-site coordinator for the program. We also hired three math interventionists at the secondary level.
– Anthony Spurgetis, Director of Human Resources, Johnston Community Schools - IA

In Livingston Parish Public Schools will have utilized ESSR funds to purchase a EAP -Employee Assistance Plan for our district. While we understand funding will be required following ESSR funds, our hope is that it will be a well needed benefit.
– Bruce Chaffin, HR Director, Livingston Parish Public Schools - LA

We have hired a Wellbeing Coordinator, in house, who will roll out wellbeing items such as: Disease Management Programs that help with pre-diabetes, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart health. The CALM App to help with mental wellbeing, along with a Fitness App and other exciting items to help combat the negative effects of COVID-19 and stress on the body.
– Amanda Schmich, Benefits Analyst, Human Resources, Sunnyside Unified School District - AZ

Grand Prairie ISD in Grand Prairie, Texas have used the ESSER funding for:

- Professional Development Opportunities as determined by campus such as Ron Clark Academy, International Society for Technology in Education and Kagan Training.
- Created a school-based After-school Counseling Center for students and families to receive mental health services, at no cost.
- Utilizing the funds to hire a Coordinator of Employee Wellness who oversees our district Employee Wellness Program. This is in addition to our district Employee Assistance Program.
- Implementing a new Data Analytics Platform and hired a specialist in this area to assist with ESSER program evaluation requirements.
- Enhancing of technology network infrastructure.

– Karry Chapman, Chief of Human Capital, Grand Prairie ISD - TX

In Highline Public Schools, a school district adjacent to Seattle, ESSER funds are dedicated to support a principal on special assignment (POSA) who will be leading efforts to diversify and strengthen the internal pipeline of leaders of color within the district. Dr. Millicent Borishade, a successful school and district leader, will lead an effort to lower (and possibly eliminate) costs associated with principal certification through university preparation programs. This effort will involve the school district developing an administrative certification program that allows its current teachers to demonstrate the needed proficiencies that lead to certification, eliminating the costly barriers to university-based certification in Washington State.
– Steve Grubb, Chief Talent Officer, Highline Public Schools - WA

At Tucson Unified School District, we have offered retention stipends to all employees who returned to the District this year, paid in two installments of \$1200 each semester. Employees had to have worked for us last year and returned to a position in the District this year to qualify. We have also implemented a referral bonus program that pays \$250 to any employee who refers a school bus driver or health services staff member for hire. Bonus pays after six months of employment to both the new employee and the employee who referred.
– Renee Heusser, Executive Director of Human Resources, Tucson Unified School District - AZ

Blog Feature: Strategies to Develop a Transparent and Humanistic Human Resources Department

by Sandy Wiley Skinner, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources,
Webster Groves Public Schools, St. Louis, MO

For aspiring Human Resources (HR) professionals, I encourage you to continue to pursue your dream. Being an HR administrator is a rewarding profession as it provides life changing opportunities for people. You will afford employees the opportunity to realize their dreams, assist them in fulfilling long term goals and in family planning.

The fundamental work of the Human Resources Department does not compliment the culture and climate of school districts or educational institutions. When I was a teacher, I would often wonder *why?* Why did the HR department make certain decisions? I'd often wondered why the HR department was distant and in some ways impersonal. After becoming an HR professional, I've come to understand this is primarily due to the fact that most schools/educational institutions are based upon relationships and providing exceptions. Fundamentally the work of the HR Department provides no exceptions. This is the one office that must provide consistency, follow policies and a clear understanding/processing of all related matters.

With this reality, it is imperative to find a balance between the work of the human resources department and the culture/climate of school districts. From my work as an educator and human resources professional for 20+ years I have found these five (5) strategies have supported the development of a bridge.

Over time, this blog will showcase those five (5) strategies that all newly and even seasoned HR professionals can utilize. This blog will highlight the first strategy.

Strategy Number One:

Ensure you have processes for the different offerings, benefits, etc. that are clear and overly communicated.

As a general rule, you can never communicate too much. Consider it as equipping your staff with handling their own matters with your support.

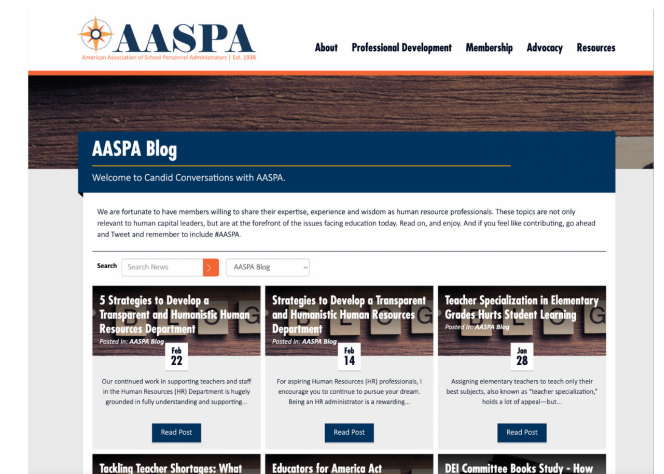
When you are newly hired, you will be able to identify a number of matters that would need to be addressed. You would want to communicate with your immediate supervisor/superintendent. Your research into the topic begins after you have permission to look into this. Here are some steps to follow:

1. Identify your district policy and practice regarding this topic.
2. Determine if there are any preceding matters that would have established a precedence.
3. Consider the employee groups that would be impacted by this.
4. Establish a small committee to support this work, involving the appropriate administrators.
5. Gather data from other districts to better understand their process. (This may not be needed.)

6. Meet with the committee and ensure your voice is minimal. Hear them first, clarify their thoughts, repeat what they say and get further thoughts/suggestions from them. You may have to meet with them multiple times, but be committed to this work. It is imperative they see you as a partner with them, versus someone who does something to you. Spend time building relationships with the committee, etc.
7. When you have a plan of action, work to implement this. Clear it at all levels and then communicate, communicate and communicate.
8. Ways of communicating include offering the changes in multiple communication channels, i.e. flier, road shows, short video, create a handbook, etc.
9. Create a solid platform for communication, Google Drive, etc. with all of the information sent as an email.

Again, these tips will assist you in creating a more humanistic version of the human resources department. Stay tuned, as step two (2) will be even more practical and take you a step further in your human resources career.

*To view more blogs, visit aaspa.org/news/aaspa-blog



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The AASPA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summit is a two-day event developed for those individuals who are seeking to increase their knowledge in the areas of leadership, recruitment, selection and retention of diverse individuals in PK-12.

Participants will be able to select from sessions specific to recruitment as well as strategic leadership in human resource practices for diversity, equity and inclusion.

Attendees Will Learn:

1. How to bridge the gap between a diverse workforce and one that is inclusive
2. New and best practices for diversity recruitment
3. Information that may be shared with school boards and communities regarding diversity, equity and inclusion
4. Strategies to increase retention of diverse employees

SESSIONS INCLUDE:

- Lessons Learned in Diversifying the Educator Pipeline
- Beyond Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Why Racial Equity Matters!
- HR Leadership in Trauma Informed Schools
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Who Should Attend?

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KEYNOTE: How to Overcome Implicit Bias in Hiring

Dr. Cheryl Butts, Executive Director of Human Resources/Social Justice Educator, Taunton Public Schools, Taunton, MA

Unconscious Bias or Implicit Bias exists even if we are actively encouraging more diversity in our hiring process. In this session, we will attempt to understand where our biases come from and how they affect everyday decisions in recruitment. We will also share some tools and processes that will help hiring managers recognize and reduce their bias and blind spots and build awareness, thus thinking more consciously when making hiring decisions.



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