

# the **COMPASS**

AUGUST - OCTOBER 2022

## *Conference Preview Issue*

**AASPA'S 84<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**



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



Hello AASPA Members!

I was going to start by saying that I cannot believe how fast the year has sped by, but then I remembered that as SuperHeRoes we are accustomed to working at supersonic speeds. With that said, I am looking forward to seeing you all in Orlando, FL this year to "Celebrate Our Superheroes."

This has been an exciting year for AASPA. Superheroes model for others what right looks like. Our outstanding networking and professional development opportunities do exactly that for our members. AASPA has continued to provide a variety of webinars, in person and virtual boot camps, professional publications and the Human Capital Leadership Summit to provide best practices and unparalleled learning. Superheroes must ensure that all members of the community are treated fairly and consistently. This year's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Summit set new standards for attendance and excellence, while ensuring that this all important topic remains at the forefront of human capital leadership strategy. Superheroes must be able to cover great distances in short periods of time. The State Leaders' Retreat brought affiliate leaders together from all over North America for exceptional learning and networking at our SuperHeRo headquarters in Kansas City.

I'm also very excited about two brand new events this year that AASPA held to address the overall education staffing shortage. Superheroes lead the way for others. AASPA led other school associations, professional organizations, state departments of education and higher education departments in a joint discussion about the education shortage during the first ever National Education Shortage Summit. As every Superhero knows, HR must demonstrate courage and go above and beyond every day. AASPA held a "Day on the Hill" this summer in Washington, DC, to meet with legislative staff and courageously advocate for education.

So whether you are a fan of Marvel or DC, or a fan of all HR heroes, I look forward to coming together to celebrate each other as we gather again for AASPA's 84th Annual Conference October 10-13, 2022, in Orlando, Florida. Our AASPA staff has put together an amazing experience filled with outstanding keynote speakers, top notch professional development sessions, unique abilities to connect with vendors and engaging networking opportunities.

AASPA members assemble!

Brian White  
AASPA President

# SAY NO THE RIGHT WAY

by Dr. Brandon Eighmy, Director of Human Resources;  
Carlisle Community School District; Carlisle, IA

On a yearly basis, our administrative team evaluates our hiring processes to confirm consistency, reliability and relevancy. We review our interview questions to guarantee we are gathering the most important knowledge and experiences our candidates have to offer as they relate to our shared values. Our principals and hiring directors review the processes to ensure our practices and written procedures are the same so that when it is time to make hires our teams can move into action without delay. However, the hardest part for leaders to master is the conversation with the candidates who were not selected.

In the early 2000's I applied to be an elementary principal in a small eastern Iowa community. I made the trip over to the interview and went through the process as a finalist. After the interview the superintendent left a voicemail for me to 'get in touch' with him. After calling more than once over the course of two days I decided to go back to the district website to look for more information, only to see that the student newspaper had written a story on the new elementary principal that had been hired. It wasn't me. Ouch. No feedback. No coaching conversation. Nothing.

In my first year as a building principal, I had the opportunity to hire multiple teachers in my building of about 750 students. As my team went through the hiring process, we made our hires and then the hardest part came next; making the phone calls to those who didn't get the job. I found myself stuttering and stammering, saying how hard it was for me to make the call, not giving any real feedback or even communicating fake rationale. When I got off the phone with a particular candidate who asked me a simple question of 'What can I do better', to which I had no real reply, it dawned on me that I was treating these candidates exactly as I had been treated when I applied for that first principal position. It was at that time I decided to do the right thing by those who aren't getting the job for which they worked hard to apply and interview.

The purpose of this article is to provide guidance to hiring administrators on how to make the difficult call to cover the legal bases of the hiring process along with showing respect to your disappointed candidates. With these pieces of advice, hiring administrators may even be able to keep the door open for future positions with the same candidate pool. The following points are:



## Don't Do:

1. Don't bury the lede. Identify yourself and thank them for their time and effort in the process and then get to it. There is a ton of anticipation after the interview, and the candidates just want to hear where they stand. Tell them in the first 15 seconds of the phone call.
2. It's not about you. When you call a candidate with news they don't want to hear don't tell them how hard it is for you to make the call. They don't care about that and the value of the notion that you are showing someone how much you care by saying 'it's hard' doesn't pay dividends.
3. Don't be overly comparative. You can state what the successful candidate did well, but avoid comparative feedback. Stick to your experience with the candidate at hand.
4. Don't leave a voicemail. Certainly, don't leave a voicemail on the first phone call. And, it should go without saying, but do not text a negative outcome to an interviewee. That's something middle school kids do when they break up with each other.
5. Don't sell out your team. You are the person hired to make the call. It doesn't do the candidate any good for you to tell them that they were your first choice, but the team went a different direction.

## Definitely Do:

1. Practice the conversation. It is ok to tell each unsuccessful candidate the same structured information with regard to the hiring process. Something along the lines of "...we have made an offer to, and received an acceptance from, another candidate..." This keeps the message consistent.
2. Be professional. This is vital to the hiring process. Your professionalism may keep the door open for making future hires out of the same candidate pool. This includes your tone of voice and your willingness to listen.
3. Be as specific as possible. If there are areas of the candidate's experience or parts of the interview where improvement is necessary, then share what you can with them.
4. Keep your process clean. Make announcements or



press releases on social media after making personal contact with each unsuccessful candidate. If your school board approves hiring candidates, wait until after they have done so.



## Maybe Do:

1. During the phone call it may be appropriate to schedule a second call to provide specific, appropriate feedback.
2. Keep a timer for each call so as to not make each call longer than it needs to be.
3. Have a plan to exit. If you are concerned that the call could go sideways or become uncomfortable, practice your way through a plan to finish the conversation in a professional way.

The bottom line is that while everyone goes into an interview knowing that they run a risk of being told 'no', that doesn't mean that they should leave the process feeling disrespected. After all, it is highly possible that the same person you said 'no' to, could end up being the next 'yes' and if they leave your process with a bad taste in their mouth, you may have lost them as an applicant. In a field with dwindling numbers, where quality is at a premium, it is imperative to get the entire hiring process right, including that tough conversation with the unsuccessful candidates.



Dr. Brandon Eighmy works as Director of Human Resources and School Services at Carlisle Community School District in Carlisle, Iowa. CCSD is a school district with 2,300 students and 350

staff members. With ten years of experience in Human Resources and nine years of experience as a building level principal, he has built human capital protocols and created systems and structures that work for small/mid-size school districts. Dr. Eighmy's systems are flexible enough to allow for building principals and hiring directors to include the right people and steps in the hiring process. Dr. Eighmy has worked with surrounding districts and schools across the state to help build hiring practices that work best for them.

# RUNNING YOUR HR DIVISION LIKE A PRINCIPAL



by Keeli Bowen, Chief Human Resources Officer;  
Cobb County School District; Marietta, GA

As a school building leader, I was charged with ensuring the safety and security of students and staff, serving as the instructional leader and serving and supporting the stakeholders in our community. When I was appointed Chief Human Resources Officer of the second largest district in our state, I felt like my role was very similar to that of a principal:

- Ensure the safety and security of the HR Division
- Lead the HR Division
- Serve and support the employees of our district

The only problem was my experience in HR was limited. As a former teacher, assistant principal and principal I knew just enough about Human Resources to be dangerous. I would say the same was true when I transitioned from a classroom teacher to an administrator. I had not taught every grade level and I was not necessarily familiar with every content standard. However, I was open to learning. I knew who to ask when I had a question and I love leading others. And I led with a commonsense approach. This is when I decided to run our HR division like I ran a school.

As a leader and planner by nature, I took time to observe, listen and collect data on what was working and what wasn't working. Fortunately for me, I serve an incredibly knowledgeable, willing and service-oriented team who were willing to join me in the following steps:

## Step 1: Building a Sense of Belonging in the Division

- **Revived the Sunshine Committee:** This committee collected dues from each of the staff members within HR. They celebrate birthdays and plan opportunities for fellowship.
- **Collected a List of Favorite Things:** We created an electronic form where members of the HR division could share their birthdays, favorite drinks, snacks and office supply. This is updated annually and is shared with the division.

## Step 2: Gathering Input

- **Key Values:** We provided an opportunity for every team member in our division to share keywords describing our role. From there, we had a committee of volunteers who drafted and presented our key values. These words are prominently displayed throughout our building to keep them at the forefront of our actions and reflective practices.
- **Collected Staff Input:** We asked for staff input on things such as office décor and professional learning needs. The key here is following through when requests are made. We provide options and ideas based on access and availability. If we leave it open-ended, we also communicate means and resources are limited.

## Step 3: Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

- **Created an Internal Overview of each Department:** Within the division at a local school, each department is broken up either by content

or grade level, however, all are responsible for facilitating student learning. That concept can be transferred to Human Resources. Each department has a specific function and its team members have specific roles and responsibilities. The common goal is to serve all prospective and current employees, from onboarding to retirement. The overview created provides a succinct description of leaders within the department, how many team members make up the department and three to five main key roles of the department.

## Step 4: Establish Communication Strategies

- **Identified Communication Strategies for Each Stakeholder:** As shared above, we must communicate with a variety of stakeholders relative to the four important responsibilities: recruitment, training, support and retention. In addition to the most commonly used strategy, using websites, we utilize a wide variety of tools to communicate effectively aimed at recruiting and retention such as media outlets, Chamber of Commerce, Partners in Education, social media, yard signs, billboards and most recently electronic signs at local theaters. Other communication tools are utilized for internal communication aimed at training, supporting and informing, such as a weekly newsletter to leaders, a quarterly newsletter to the entire organization and onboarding for new employees.
- **Created At-A-Glance Calendar:** HR creates an annual calendar that aligns with the school year calendar and is shared in the summer with building leaders. The calendar includes events specific to HR functions such as Open Enrollment dates, Job Fairs, Contract dates, Informational meetings, etc.
- **Collaborate:** Successful principals recognize the value of learning communities for promoting student and school success. The same is true for leading a successful HR team. Our HR directors meet regularly within their teams (PLC) and they gather weekly for cross-departmental collaboration. Additionally, they participate in extended collaboration within the division to strengthen team discussions, leadership and decision-making. HR representatives participate in cross-divisional discussions relative to school initiatives, vetting of programs and materials, New Teacher Academy, state reporting and the leadership interview process.

## Step 5: Remember our Purpose

- **School Visits:** We encourage our team members to visit schools. This not only allows us an opportunity to connect with our leaders and school staff, but it also reminds us all that we are all here for the students. They are our purpose.
- **Display Student Pictures, Staff Pictures and Student Work:** Since our offices are not in the local school, it was suggested that we post pictures of students, staff and display student work around our HR building. When we are unable to get to the schools, we are reminded of our purpose each day as we walk through the halls of our office.

Leading a school and leading an HR division both require me to observe, listen, collect data, set goals, outline simple steps to achieve those goals and celebrate success along the way. In both settings, success does not happen overnight. It is a process. Effective leaders understand we are always learning and striving to do better, be better. I knew in order to help our team be better, I had to start with building relationships. I knew I had to start by gaining trust, being transparent and opening communication. Before I could invite my team to join me in the steps I outlined above, they needed to know my ultimate goal was to help our division become stronger as individuals and as a team. The steps we have taken together have helped us become more effective, efficient and collaborative in our service to our district, our employees and most importantly, to the students we serve.



Prior to being named Chief Human Resources Officer in December of 2020, Keeli served in a variety of capacities within the Cobb County School District. As the Chief Human Resource Officer of the second largest school district in Georgia, with over 18,000 employees and over 106,000 students, Keeli serves on the Superintendent's Executive Cabinet while also overseeing the five Human Resources Departments with a staff of over 60 dedicated employees.

# THERE ARE NO LONGER OCEANS

by Dr. Cecile Wallace, Supervisor;  
Duval County Schools; Jacksonville, FL

*School administrators, it is  
time to replenish the waters.*

hink back to the fall 2013-2014 school year. It started like all others in the two decades that preceded it. Teachers in droves flocked back to their classrooms a few weeks before students arrived with a brilliant, recharged energy. Classrooms were full of teachers excited to get back to the joy of helping lightbulbs go off in the minds of young learners. In those classrooms that did not yet have a teacher, no worries, applications were flying in, new hires were in onboarding eager to be placed and there were oceans of individuals graduating from College of Education programs, large groups of professionals who decided to come over from other industries and programs such as Teach for America were bringing in talent to school districts from across the United States. We are now embarking on the 2022-2023 school year and the start of school looks dramatically different. The oceans of potential candidates now more resemble backyard pools and enormous nationwide vacancies have forced school districts to increase class sizes to ensure that all students have a qualified teacher in place for day one.

### **One Overlooked Large Contributing Factor to the Shortage**

There are a multitude of factors that contribute to the shortage. According to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, “between the 2007-08 and 2015-16 academic years, there was a 23 percent decline in the number of people completing teacher-preparation programs. Teachers state that the pay does not compensate for all the work involved.”

Teachers express that there is a lack of support from parents, administrators and the community and classroom management has become more difficult. Stringent certification requirements make it difficult to remain credentialed to teach. This industry, as is the case with many others, has not fully recovered from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

All of the above factors, and a number of others, all weigh heavily in our current situation. Yes, we see this, hear this, feel this, however, we are grievously neglecting to address one major factor that has gradually, yet significantly helped build to this critical shortage as well: the reactive approach of school-based administrators. To help address and reduce

**There was a decline of**

# 23%

**between 2008 and 2016  
in the number of people  
completing teacher  
prep programs.**

shortage numbers, school-based administrators must take an active, intentional and proactive approach to new and veteran teachers versus a reactive and at times reduced approach.

### **A Negative Perspective Shared by Some School-Based Administration and the Associated Consequences**

Many school-based administrators have been in their roles for quite some time. They remember the days when if one teacher did not work out, no problem; they could simply reach out to their Human Resources Department and post the position as a vacancy. Or they would interview someone who emailed or called them to see if there were openings at their school. Amid all of the responsibilities of school-based administrators, not having to worry about the vacancies at their schools was a relief, as there was so much else that needed to be addressed. Some administrators grew very accustomed to the ocean of teachers. If a teacher seemed to have trouble with classroom management or was terminated due to certification issues, they wouldn't be too concerned. There was no need to step in and coach teachers or work with teachers to complete the certification requirements because they could simply be replaced. One administrator stated, “if a teacher does not do what they are supposed to do for certification, then they clearly do not want a job. I am not going to do their job for them because it is not my responsibility. I did all that I had to do to obtain all of my certifications as did so many other teachers. I am not going to hold an adult's hand.”

A large number of administrators had this mindset. The issue with not truly investing in employees is

that employees see this and when they leave, not only do they have a distaste for that particular administrator, but for the entire school district and in some cases, for the profession entirely. Most teachers work additional hours to prepare their classrooms and lessons for students, they call families or visit homes, grade papers, tutor after school or sponsor afterschool programs, and they spend money on making the learning experience very meaningful. They must complete paperwork, IEP meetings, facilitate conferences with parents and attend professional development sessions. So, when an administrator is not supportive, harshly critical or even crass with difficult situations, teachers leave to make more money with less stress involved.

With the number of interested teacher candidates decreasing and the others leaving with no intention of returning due to negative experiences, the responsibility that once belonged to the teacher is now the administrators'. With teacher vacancies and a lack of coverage, administrators are now in classrooms for large portions of the day. It is better to proactively engage and retain teachers, versus reactively fill positions when a teacher who feels unsupported departs. The authors at *classroom.synonym.com* write that “The educational system will not function effectively with weak school administration. Effective administration begins with leaders who know how to motivate teachers and students.” Research shows that strong teacher-administrator relationships cultivate a positive school culture, help teachers “buy in” to school policies and requests and ultimately lead to better classroom instruction. These relationships also help minimize teacher burnout.

### **We Need a Paradigm Shift Immediately**

In this current climate, school-based administrators do not have the luxury of not being actively and positively involved in teacher retention. They must be intentional in their work to retain strong teachers and grow others into stronger teachers. It saves time and resources when an employee is retained versus locating and training new teachers. Administrators must now understand that they must shift their mindsets from simply managing employees to actively engaging and building the individuals on their teams. The Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies states: “Teacher attrition is a

considerable burden for students and school leaders. Therefore, it is important for administrators to develop policies which increase retention rates.” In several nationwide studies, one theme that is consistent across each school district is the idea that each school building is led by supportive leaders or administrative teams. School districts should train administrators and equip them with the tools to do so. This is something that should be implemented within the next two school years to combat drastically dwindling numbers.

### **How Can School-Based Administrators Sustainably Help with Retention?**

Just like teachers, administrators face a large number of responsibilities and their positions can be extremely overwhelming. For administrators to successfully take an active role in employee retention, they must be able to implement measures that are reasonable and manageable. Below is a list of things that administrators can do on their end:

#### **1. Meet with all employees (veterans and novice) twice a year.**

Ask veteran teachers what policies are working and what are recommendations for improvement. This will help teachers to feel valued and allow administrators to think of changes for viewpoints that are consistently voiced by teachers. For novice teachers entering their second and third years, administrators can ask what helped them at the start of the year. What do they wish they had or wish they would have known at the beginning of the year? What suggestions do they have for supporting new teachers? For brand new teachers, at the beginning of the year, administrators can ask how they would like to be supported. At the midpoint of the year, novice teachers can be more specific about their needs, as they have had more experience in their role. After the conversations, administrators should reasonably and gradually implement what they can. They should also highlight these changes to teachers, showing that their voice matters.

#### **2. Be intentional about supporting certification requirements.**

Administrators should have simple digital certification profiles with due dates provided by the Certification Department. They should know who needs what when and support by allowing coverage to prepare

for certification exams or classes. Administrators can also check in with employees to monitor progress or work with supporting mentors to ensure that teachers are actively working on the requirements. Administrators should also not place teachers in roles that will temporarily fill a vacancy while putting a teacher in jeopardy of certification requirements. If the teacher must be placed in a vacancy such as this, the administrator should support them with class coverage or even cover the cost of the class or exam that will prevent the teacher from jeopardizing their certification.

#### **3. Employees should be grown, not thrown away.**

When a teacher struggles with lesson planning, curriculum building or even classroom management, administrators should listen to the struggles of the teacher and look for ways to support them. If a teacher is willing to learn and accept feedback and advice, administrators should pair them with a stronger teacher or provide detailed next steps as well as professional development to support that teacher, and even develop an informal improvement plan. Administrators should also check in with the teacher periodically to see if the plan is working or if it should be modified. An employee should never be belittled or feel like they are a failure or alone. Positive learning experiences will encourage them to stay while negative experiences will have them planning for an exit strategy. Also, administrators should find professional development for the entire staff, in general, to equip their team with relevant and effective tools in their toolkits.

#### **4. Recognize all employees.**

Recognition does not always have to be monetary. Administrators should find creative ways to allow teachers to feel appreciated. Work with the school’s PTA to make gift baskets or buy supplies for the teacher’s classroom. Shout the teacher out on the morning announcement, in the school’s newsletter or at a faculty meeting. Print them a certificate and have it signed by the superintendent. Personally cover their classroom for half a day allowing them to leave early on a Friday.

#### **5. Grow your staff by investing in college students, current students at your school & support personnel.**

Grow Your Own programs have picked up momentum in recent years because they are effective ways to build a more resilient team! School-Based Administrators can:

- Work to attract more college students. They can connect with College of Education Programs or invite interns to their schools who can transition into teachers once they graduate.
- Introduce younger students to teaching through programs such as TOTs (Teachers of Tomorrow) or through Teacher Academies in high schools. TOTs allow elementary school students to shadow teachers, grade papers and learn the role of the teacher to see if their expectations of what teachers do align with the actual duties. Teacher Academies allow students to take Dual Enrollment classes in high school, earn their associate’s degree by the end of their senior year and then enter College of Education Programs for their final two years in college. They will then emerge as fully certified teachers.
- Partner with the school district to help strong support personnel who are interested in becoming teachers to earn their bachelor’s degree and then teach.

In just a few weeks, the 2022-2023 school year will begin. The nation will see its highest number of vacancies to date, district and school-based administrators will cover classrooms for which a substitute could not be located and Human Resources teams will continue to diligently work to employ more teachers. No, at this time there are no oceans of candidates lined up to teach, however, school-based administrators work to maintain our current levels. The positive experiences will be then shared by word of mouth and through social media, potentially encouraging others to join or rejoin a system that is constantly working to improve in general and actively supporting and valuing teachers who will face varying challenges. With a new shift in the minds of many administrators, schools everywhere could benefit from proactive, intentionally supportive leadership which can change the face of retention through sustainable methods. The best part of this scenario is that some administrators are beginning to implement programs and activities that engage and re-energize their teams while others have been doing so for years. Administrators, keep in mind that there is a high demand for teachers and a diminishing supply. Teachers can be very selective as they can go to different public, private and charter schools, neighboring school districts, teach virtually or change industries entirely. What will you do to keep your water levels ideal?



Cecile Wallace is a Supervisor with Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Florida. Although her primary role is to oversee the collection of 13,000 employee evaluations to ensure that all are in compliance, Cecile is a dynamic Human Resource guru who has developed a large number of recruitment, training and retention initiatives. Her strengths reside in her creative, versatile and adaptable ability to both initiate and facilitate multiple district programs and initiatives simultaneously. Her proven dedication to ensuring educational excellence in the classroom by creating and refining innovative human resource programs, improving teacher recruitment and retention and supporting school-based and district administrators significantly assists Duval County Public Schools in fulfilling its mission.



# NEW TO HR: 5 STRATEGIES TO SUCCEED

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

Over the past few years, Human Resources (HR) has evolved into many functions to better serve employees and districts. Starting a new role in human resources can unveil a lot of uncertainty and possible uncharted territory. A new department, people, environments and set of responsibilities come with the job. Together we have had our share of successes and hurdles when learning what it takes to succeed at the district level in HR. We've jumped the start line when making decisions before completing the research and had wins when implementing new processes. Our goal for you is to help alleviate the nuances of your new adventure of HR by giving five strategies that guided us along the way. We came up with these strategies to help set you up for success in your new HR leadership role.



## Strategy One: Find Your Support Resources

Organizations provided in your local, state and national areas are the best resources for support. For us, being a part of the local (East TX TASPA, Education Service Center), state (TASPA, TX Association of School Board -TASB, TX Association of School Business Officials - TASBO) and national (AASPA) organizations has provided webinars, a variety of training and host of conferences with sessions that discuss everyday topics as well as collaboration panels in human resources. Also, TASB HR Library shares different templates to use when establishing FMLA protocol, Board Policy, HR Operation forms and much more. Lastly, your Governing Board (Texas Education Agency - TEA), have that number stored in your contacts and even get on a first-name basis with a representative.

## Strategy Two: Familiarize Yourself with the Personnel Code/Regulations

Each state has its own governing body. It is a must that you get familiar with the rules and regulations. Even in a digital world, it is useful to still have a printed copy nearby to use as a quick reference. Highlight, make notes and tab away! Also, don't forget to get the updated copy when it is revised.



## Strategy Three: Analyzing Current Processes

You should figure out how the process works, if the process actually works and the things that don't work at all. Many times, "this is how we have always done it" is outdated and no one really knows why they do it. Talk to the people involved in the process like administrators and other human resources staff. It is always best when things are kept simple. The fewer unnecessary steps, the better. The administrators will thank you because we all don't have enough hours in the day.



## Strategy Four: Network



Networking is the KEY! Nothing has been more beneficial than establishing a network. Having other professionals to reach out to can help you learn so much and can also be reaffirming. Attending conferences is one of the best ways to start your network. Find others who are near your area, as some issues are specific to location. Look for people who work in departments that are close to your size because some things that work for smaller districts may work differently for bigger districts. Also, get to know some vendors. You may encounter issues later and you will know of a company that can help you meet your needs. Adding mentors to your network is invaluable. The wisdom they provide can keep you from reinventing the wheel.

## Strategy Five: Don't Beat Yourself Up

You won't learn everything in the first, second or even the third year. Things are always changing, just be sure to keep up. Many things you will learn as you are going through it. Don't stress out! As long as you acknowledge what you don't know and then research it, you will be alright. Also, don't be afraid to speak up when you do know the answer. Unless it is in law or policy, there is no one right way to get the job done. It is also important to speak up about the things that you need to do your job. This can sometimes mean support from your supervisor.



These five strategies have truly guided our careers in human resources. This is a new chapter in your career and by taking the initiative to immerse yourself in this new role will be exciting and scary at the same time. Remember, don't put too much pressure on yourself to get everything right. The goal is to understand your new role in HR and maximize your chances of success.

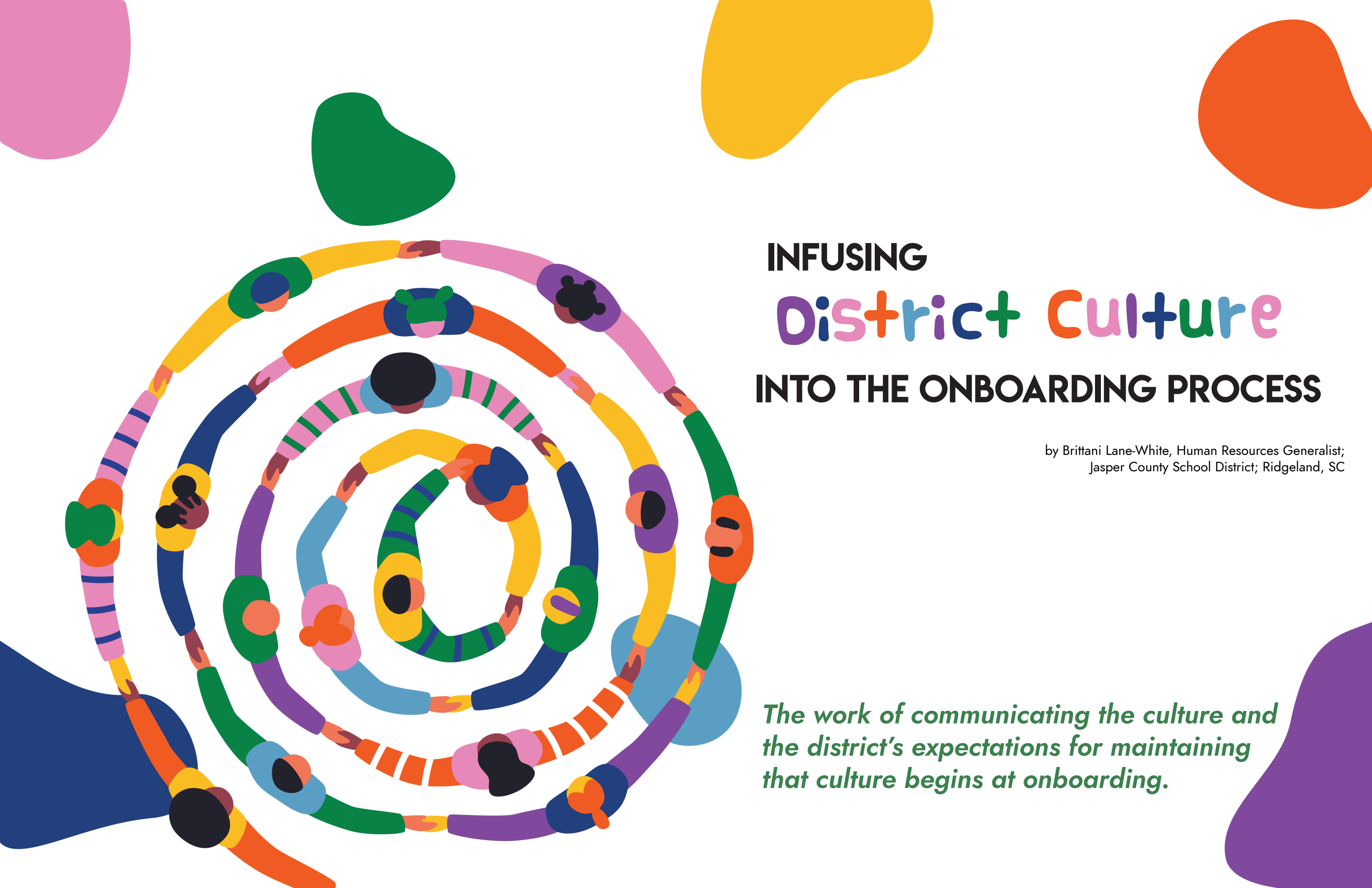


*Danielle Copeland, Director of Human Resources at Malakoff ISD, has been in education for 18 years, with 15 of those as an administrator. She has served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and has been in human resources for the last three years. She is married with two sons and has a master's 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 10 years. She is married with two daughters and has a master's degree in Human Resources Development.*





**INFUSING**  
**Di+strict+ Culture**  
**INTO THE ONBOARDING PROCESS**

by Brittani Lane-White, Human Resources Generalist;  
Jasper County School District; Ridgeland, SC

*The work of communicating the culture and the district's expectations for maintaining that culture begins at onboarding.*

**T**he definition of workplace culture in its most simple terms is the behaviors and attitudes of a workplace and its employees. Across our discipline, it is generally accepted that the employee experience begins the day an employee applies for a job within the organization. The work of communicating the culture and the district's expectations for maintaining that culture all begin at that moment as well. An employee's

first interaction, whether with the receptionist answering the phone, the landing page of the district website, a social media account or the opportunity listing on an online employment website serves as an introduction to district culture. Human Resource teams and hiring managers should begin to give serious consideration to recruiting by rethinking recruitment and the way workplace culture and norms are conceived. For many reasons, it is imperative that we join together in diverse teams to further develop recruitment strategies by taking suggestions from stakeholders within our companies and communities to ensure recruitment efforts are free from discrimination, unbiased, welcoming, accessible and reflective of district culture.

### How do you change or maintain district culture?

Culture shifts and maintenance take work; however, as Human Resources professionals we all know that the work of shifting and maintaining culture is meaningful. Efforts to dismantle issues that negatively impact district culture must first begin with understanding the issue from below the surface. The Culture Iceberg

Theory or the Iceberg Model of Culture explains how cultural unrest, much like an iceberg, requires a look beyond the events or aspects that are easily perceived from the outside or the "tip of the iceberg." Employee handbooks and policies often address these outward behaviors, visible aspects and noticeable events. Most successful organizations and efficient human resource teams strive to ensure these aspects add to employee comfort and engagement, but human resource strategy cannot only address what is visible. Cultures are held together, much like an iceberg, by the enormously large invisible mass below the surface, a phenomenon termed "deeper culture." For example, dress codes, technology, employee benefits, processes, flexible work arrangement and office environments all influence the visible portions of employee attitudes and district behaviors; however, unseen factors that are less visible deeply impact and perpetuate district culture. The deeper culture that drives organizations carries an impact that can either build or break a district. The expression of deeper culture is evident and can be measured in employee attitudes towards the district mission, employee flexibility, general organizational work ethic, expression of core values, desire to engage in learning opportunities, the level of employee trust and notions of safety. Creating change in an organization, particularly educational organizations, requires influence over the systems embedded within the educational setting. When influencing systems or conceptualizing the multiple dimensions of work within an organization, the first step human resource leaders must take is gathering information from the major players within and outside the system. The key to successful change is rooted in our ability to discover the imposed purpose attributed to systems by employees and stakeholders so that then the behaviors toward the system can be understood. For example, simply stating that a particular group of people does not apply for roles within your district can be a fact that is solely based on patterns observed

over time. However, conversations with major players and stakeholders can illuminate barriers unaddressed by the simple statement such as transportation issues, language barriers, geographical limitations and information deserts. Once the behaviors towards the district's embedded systems are understood, human resource teams can then influence these systems by creating and implementing measurable goals with clear objectives, purpose, benefits, approach, roles and responsibilities. Basing human resource strategy on the understanding and perspectives of the employees and community is key to effective organizational change and equity leadership.

### How do you communicate culture during the onboarding process?

The onboarding process is one of the most crucial steps taken by employers for employees because it is the beginning of the employer-employee relationship. The goal of the onboarding process is for employees to smoothly transition into the working environment. Beyond collecting necessary information and documentation, effective onboarding processes guide employees to full integration by introducing the employee to the district's pace, the tasks and goals of their role and the standards and mission of the organization. Aspects of deeper culture that drive organizational success are authority, health and wellbeing, purpose and meaning, communication, employee engagement, learning and development, collaboration and teamwork. Infusing district culture (to include both deep culture and visible culture) into this process is simple.

Enthusiastically greet and welcome all candidates. The tone and frequency of communication during the onboarding process set the employee's expectations for the first day of work and the employment experience long-term. For larger districts or schools that use onboarding software systems, ensure letters and

electronic communication feature a personal touch, although electronically distributed. Even in the pre-onboarding stages, do not be afraid of telling the potential candidate who you are as a district or school. The tone and consistency of tone in communication is foundational to creating and proving the alignment of district core values, discipline, expectations, order and even enjoyment.

#### 1. Have a comprehensive onboarding checklist.

Companies that use onboarding checklists that are written and formal report higher retention rates. Do not be afraid to share onboarding checklists with potential employees. Keeping the employee in the loop and managing expectations not only increases retention, but also models expectations for communication.

#### 2. Ensure employees have an up-to-date copy of their job description to include evaluation expectations.

Clearly communicate what you are looking for in each role by stating what skills, knowledge and passions the ideal candidate should possess. Ensure the language used in the description and evaluation expectations is inclusive and culturally competent.

#### 3. Introduce staff to department and organization leaders.

Ensure employees understand the organization's structure and contacts within the organization. This makes it easier for employees to feel they have the authority to find support and address concerns when needed.

#### 4. Monitor new hire progress over time.

As a generalist for a small rural district, checking in with new employees after one week, one month and six months in their role is less complicated. However, for larger school systems or smaller systems with a myriad

of varying responsibilities in the Human Resources department, using a survey system or sharing the check-in process with supervisors also works. Without clear communication and goals, employees are left to guess or continue making errors of which they could be unaware. Checking in encourages employees to remember they are valued and not forgotten, which creates trust and fosters openness.

#### 5. Receive feedback.

Receiving feedback is possibly the most crucial of these six steps. Feedback whether constructive, positive or negative can be used to describe employee perspectives, explain employee behaviors and inform HR processes. Use the employee's fresh eyes, comparisons to previous employers and recent matriculation through your processes as valuable insight.



With over 16 years of experience in Human Resources for both formal and informal education institutions, Brittani Lane-White is the Human Resources Generalist for Jasper County School District in South Carolina and the Chief Learning Officer for Life Nation University, a Christian Interactive Learning Community. A distinguished honor graduate of Summerville High School, Lane-White continued her education at Claflin University where she received a Bachelors of Science in Biology and Chemistry. She held South Carolina teaching certifications and a Masters in the Art of Teaching from South Carolina State University. She is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in Education Administration and Curriculum Development. Brittani Lane-White is now known as Olivia's Mom because in October of 2018, she gave birth to the sweetest girl. In receipt of the greatest gift she has ever received, the educator whose life was dedicated to inspiring the joy of learning to children now includes sparking the wonder of dreams and the powerful possibilities that lie within her own child-Little Miss Olivia.

## COMING SOON...

### Human Capital Leadership Summit

The Human Capital Leadership Summit is designed for school leaders who are past their first three years of human capital management and who are looking for that next level of professional development in HR leadership. Sessions are dedicated to helping participants grow professionally in their knowledge as well as personally in their leadership skills.

*Tentatively Scheduled for Palm Springs, December, 2022*

### Boot Camp

AASPA's Personnel Administrator Boot Camp is the perfect time to pause and focus on your professional development, and there's no better way to truly reflect on your leadership than with our lineup of inspiring and knowledgeable HR speakers.

AASPA's Boot Camp is an unrivaled opportunity for PK-12 HR School System Leaders to collaborate across all levels and gather valuable resources you can use to help your teachers, employees and school district. Breakouts follow two strands of topics - one for the basic HR professional and another for the more advanced administrator.

*Tentatively Scheduled for January, 2023*

### National Educator Shortage Summit

The National Educator Shortage Summit is an interactive event that convenes focused groups of P-20 stakeholders to address the challenges of the national shortage of educators and the educator pipeline and share ways to replicate practices via a national strategy. Above all, this Summit starts comprehensive conversations among the P-20 education community and serve as a place where different groups can pool different perspectives.

*Tentatively Scheduled for January, 2023*

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summit

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.

*Tentatively Scheduled for April, 2023*

**Learn more about these and other events at [www.aaspa.org/events/](http://www.aaspa.org/events/)**

**Have you checked out our recorded webinars?**

[www.aaspa.org/news/recorded-webinars](http://www.aaspa.org/news/recorded-webinars)

The screenshot shows the AASPA website's "Recorded Webinars" page. It features a search bar, a list of webinar titles with dates, and a brief description of the service. The webinars listed include "Effective Tutoring Solutions with ESSER Funding" (July 19) and "Follow the Data: Forging Actionable Recruitment Strategies" (June 7).



# WHY JOURNEY MAPS MATTER

by Kirk Koennecke, Superintendent;  
Indian Hill EVSD: Cincinnati, OH

What is a journey map, you ask? It's a little-known tool that Human Capital specialists in the K-12 space have seldom used, but they can evoke powerful culture change and climate results over time. Journey maps help an organization that cares about its employees to communicate that value. The activity itself can help build awareness about the value of feedback and promote a culture of listening and transparency. The feedback itself can be multi-faceted, ongoing and provide leaders with powerful insights to help shape the climate for everyone in the organization.

Human Capital leaders must decide what questions to ask. Here are the 5 steps to creating a template:

1. Lean into the vision and missions of the organization.
2. Think about the employee lens of the employment process as a whole, from onboarding to mentoring to daily experiences and ultimately, exiting the organization as a whole. Determine what you want to assess.
3. Create open-ended questions that allow for sharing.
4. Determine the intervals for collection.
5. Share a summary of results for continuous improvements across the organization.

The "secret sauce" is in the powerful questions you ask. Are your hiring policies equitable? How do employees feel about promotion? How do they really feel about a transfer? What are staff communicating about salary and benefits? These are some of the important pieces of feedback journey maps can help managers parse out over time, with intentional check-ins at intervals throughout the employee's journey in an organization.

"Employees tend to create and share feedback loops in silos. Journey Maps help break through to the root causes of issues in the workplace," says Jim Nichols, Chief Operations Officer at Indian Hill EVSD.

Powerful data emerges when we confront feelings through self-reflection. Individual educators are seldom asked by the HR Directors to perform self-reflection journals. But in the fast-paced ebb and flow of a school year, individuals often do not take the time to reflect in an intentional, routine and consistent manner.

**"Employees tend to create and share feedback loops in silos. Journey Maps help break through to the root causes of issues in the workplace"**

Teachers are usually tasked out during outmoded evaluation meetings that are more formal and rigid, lacking the power of reflection conversations based on their own individual and emotional experiences at work. Classified and support staff members in schools are rarely, if ever, asked how they feel about their career trajectory. For managers of people today, this is unacceptable. Journey maps are cultural touchstones that can provide important insights into culture maintenance, insights that don't take much time or effort once created.

Change usually results from great questions. Modeling self-reflection for employees is not only an important way to promote their own skills in leadership, these practices set a tone for personal connection through feedback loops that are so often missing in K-12 settings. In an industry where people are always being asked to connect with others and communicate their best selves, human capital leaders often overlook the most significant part of the employee experience: providing feedback to those who can help enhance their journey.

Most important of all, how does the employee feel about the journey they are taking in their career here? Do they love their career here, in this place? What do we do if they don't?

Jim Nichols adds, "As an HR Director, I find myself wanting more touchpoints with employees across job categories. This activity is especially progressive to most classified employees who don't regularly share their feelings. Map reflections can provide a less formal way to engage with them over time."

Here are three important keys to implementing journey maps as part of a human capital strategy to seek feedback from employees:

1. Create a template that is quick and easy to find and access.
2. Define the intervals to address the reflection questions and send reminder prompts to access the journey maps to the employee.
3. Create meaningful questions that allow for candid feedback to the employer and modify them over time to align with the vision and

missions of the district. Journey maps are one tool among many to solicit feedback from employees. What sets a strong journey map apart is the self-reflection that comes from answering the same set of questions throughout a career, whether it is a short-term stop or a long haul. What sets an incredible organization apart from a good one is a human capital leader that uses the feedback for continuous improvements for a better employee experience!



A veteran educational leader with 19 years of experience in administration and 27 years of service to students, Mr. Koennecke came to the Indian Hill School District in 2019 after serving as superintendent of the Graham Local School District in Central Ohio, where he led in that capacity since 2016. Prior to that position, Mr. Koennecke worked as a principal at multiple districts including Marion City Schools, Springfield City School, Barberton City Schools and the Bedford City School District.



# AASPA Day on the Hill

This month, the AASPA advocacy firm, Lobbyit, welcomed several members of AASPA's board and staff to DC for a Hill Day advocacy event. In total, we held 12 meetings with legislative offices, including Rep. Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Rep. Schneider (D-IL), Rep. DeLauro (D-CT), Rep. LaTurner (R-KS), Rep. Duncan (R-SC), Senator Durbin (D-IL), Senator Murphy (D-CT), Senator Cornyn (R-TX), Senator Graham (R-SC), Senator Marshall (R-KS), Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) and Senator Casey (D-PA). We also met with staff for Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) virtually later that week.

While this was certainly not the first time offices have heard concerns around the educator shortages, AASPA was able to provide a unique perspective as human resources and personnel administrators. In addition to sharing the white paper from the National Educator Shortage Summit, AASPA was able to highlight the need for alternate certification options, student loan forgiveness and college affordability and other key priorities. Offices were very receptive to AASPA's concerns and some new champions on the Hill were identified. Overall, AASPA is better positioned than ever before to serve as an expert resource to Hill staff as they develop legislation to address these challenges.



# Couldn't attend an AASPA event?

Check out our new member benefit, Professional Development Resource Documents. These archived resource documents are provided from past AASPA events (2017-2019) and include session materials categorized by the HCLE Standards.

VIEW RESOURCES NOW AT  
[HTTPS://WWW.AASPA.ORG/PROFESSIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-RESOURCES](https://www.aaspa.org/professional-development-resources)

## Professional Human Capital Leader in Education (pHCLE) Certification

### pHCLE Virtual Class Schedules/Times:

- September 20 - November 8, 2022 (Tuesdays 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm ET)
- January 19 - March 2, 2023 (Thursdays 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm ET)
- July 11 - August 22, 2023 (Tuesdays 11:00 am - 12:30 pm ET)
- September 21 - November 9, 2023 (Thursdays 10:30 am - 12:00 pm ET)
- Class time: 90 Minutes

### Virtual classes

Immerse yourself in 90 minutes of collaborative learning over seven class sessions. These interactive sessions are designed to reinforce key concepts and provide opportunities for reflection and application.

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pHCLE Exam  
Four pHCLE testing windows are offered each year.

- \* September 1-23, 2022
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- \* January 10-30, 2023
- \* March 15-April 5, 2023
- \* September 1-20, 2023
- \* November 10-30, 2023

For more information go to:  
<https://www.aaspa.org/hcle-certification>



# Celebrating our Superheroes

October 10 - 13, 2022  
Orlando .FL

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 84<sup>th</sup> 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
- Clincis & Ignite Sessions
- Session materials

All of this starting at \$700 for members and \$950 for non-members!

**Register Now!**

\*For package registration only

# Keynote Spotlight

**DANIEL SHANNON**  
Radical Inclusivity



\*Public Service Announcement\* the engagement models that have historically and affectionately been described as “fake it ‘til you make it,” and “get in where you fit in” are quickly becoming obsolete! The world is in the middle of a paradigm shift and personalization has transformed nearly every facet of day-to-day life! People everywhere are increasingly measuring personal affinity and value alignment when making decisions about how to invest their time, talent and treasure. Furthermore, the most successful institutions are leveraging the full humanity of their stakeholders to increase their value proposition and impact. Demonstrating the self-awareness and personal courage to show up as the most authentic version of yourself, while creating space for others to do the same has never been more important!

**Tuesday, October 11**

SPONSORED BY PowerSchool

**STEVE BRANCH**  
Attracting Tomorrow's Talent with Today's Leaders

This keynote session focuses on talent attraction and workforce retention by building understanding of who we are, how we were raised and how each generation views “work” as a part of their identity. Learn talent attraction and retention strategies to overcome generational differences and attract Millennial and Gen Z employees and keep them from leaving! Adulthood has changed and depending on my life stage, I might prioritize my lifestyle over my career... So how do you manage and motivate someone who may not be as committed to their job as previous generations? This session will give you the answers!

**Wednesday, October 12**

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**COLETTE CARLSON**  
You Management: Strategies to Avoid Burnout, Boost Resilience and Accelerate Success



Regardless of your title and role, people experience everyday stressors while they are expected to stay agile through constant change. In today's world, people are required to exceed expectations and produce more in less time with fewer resources, all while staying positive and engaged with colleagues and customers. New challenges have collapsed the boundaries between work and home, leaving people juggling opposing demands for time, energy and attention. It's no surprise, even with the best of intentions, leaders and teams feel stressed out, disconnected and emotionally exhausted. Enough! It's time for You Management!

**Thursday, October 13**

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“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!”

**Explore all things Conference at:**  
<https://www.aaspaconference.com>

# Conference Schedule

## Monday, October 10

- 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 Discovery Cove

## Tuesday, October 11

- 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 – 1:00pm Lunch, Awards, Recognition of Sponsors & 2023 Anaheim Presentation
- 1:00pm – 1:45pm Committee Meetings
- 1:45pm – 4:15pm Ignite Sessions & Clinic Workshops
- 4:15pm – 5:00pm Regional Meetings
- 5:00pm – 6:00pm Reception in Exhibit Hall
- 7:00pm – 10:00pm Texas Hoedown

## Wednesday, October 12

- 8:00am – 10:00am President's Breakfast, Business Meeting & Keynote Speaker
- 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
- 4:00pm – 4:45pm Membership Committee Meeting
- 5:00pm – 7:00pm State Reception
- 7:00pm – 10:00pm Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Reception

## Thursday, October 13

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

**Register Today at**  
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### 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.



# Pre-Conference Workshops

## Immerse Yourself & Learn More - Monday, October 10

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

### Morning Sessions 9 am – 12 pm

1. One Large Urban District's Work in Teacher Retention and Recruitment with an Update on the Interstate Compact on Teacher Licensure and How it Can Assist in Teacher Recruitment  
Dr. Aimee Green-Webb
2. Staff, Sex & Schools: Hot Legal Issues Involving School Personnel Sexual Harassment  
Jackie Gharapour Wernz
3. Employee Discipline from Soup to Nuts  
Stanley Eisenhammer
4. 100X, Becoming a Leader that Multiplies—Maximize Your Influence and Become a Leader Worth Following: Part One—Introduction to Leadership Tools  
Dennis Pauli
5. Shortage to Surplus: 5 Shifts to Address the National Educator Shortage  
Dr. Kate Heynoski, Emily Douglas-McNab, Dr. Sara Skretta
6. Unconscious Bias in the Hiring Process  
Tanisha Holland

### Afternoon Sessions 1 pm – 4 pm

7. FMLA, ADA and Workers' Compensation: Untangling the Spider Web, Legal Update and Best Practices in Leave Administration  
Scott Macdonald
8. 100X, Becoming a Leader that Multiplies—Maximize Your Influence and Become a Leader Worth Following: Part Two  
Dennis Pauli
9. Designing a Comprehensive Human Capital Management System  
Dr. Kate Heynoski, Emily Douglas-McNab, Dr. Sara Skretta
10. Kansas Teacher Retention Initiative (2021-2022): Understanding and Improving Teacher Engagement and Retention  
Dr. Bret Church
11. Talent Acquisition: Foundations for Hiring Success  
Brian White
12. Using Grow Your Own Programs to Recruit Teachers for Your District  
Dr. Shanita Aaron

\*For a complete description of the Pre-Conference Workshops, go to [www.aaspaconference.com/precon](http://www.aaspaconference.com/precon).

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