



THE COMPASS

DIRECTION FOR HR LEADERS IN EDUCATION

Uncovering the Roots: **ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO RETAIN DIVERSE EDUCATORS**

How the American education system faces a critical challenge with a significant disparity between the increasingly diverse student population and the limited representation of diverse educators.



FEBRUARY / MARCH / APRIL



International Teachers
*Bring Diversity at Language
Immersion School*

**Adapting School Recruitment Strategies
for a Competitive Labor Market:**
Four Key Steps

I'm Not Really an Ah*****
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

From the Desk of Dr. Monica Schroeder, AASPA President

Dear AASPA Members,

Happy New Year! As we prepare for the next school year—building staffing plans and launching recruitment efforts—it's also a time to reflect on what makes our organizations stand out, especially in the midst of an educator shortage. At North Shore School District 112, we've learned that a strong, positive culture is the key to attracting and retaining exceptional talent. Let me share three strategies that have been impactful for us:

1. **Using Data to Build Culture:** Twice a year, our staff complete an engagement survey. I'm proud that 86% of our team consistently report being highly satisfied and engaged—evidence of our intentional efforts to create a supportive and inspiring environment.
2. **Investing in Professional Learning:** We've explored books like *The Happiness Advantage* and *Big Potential* by Shawn Achor, and *The Power of Moments* by Chip and Dan Heath. These resources have helped us focus on fostering positivity, creating meaningful experiences and building a culture where staff and students thrive.
3. **Recruiting for Mission and Values:** Recruitment isn't just about filling vacancies—it's about finding people who align with our mission. Through training, which emphasizes actionable strategies for creating an optimistic, supportive environment, we ensure candidates understand what makes our culture unique and inspiring.

As you plan for the months ahead, I encourage you to consider how your culture shapes your organization's story—and how you share it with potential candidates. Thriving cultures don't happen by accident; they require intentionality and shared commitment.

Thank you for your tireless efforts to build environments where staff and students can flourish. I look forward to seeing what we'll accomplish together in 2025 and to connecting with you in Nashville for the 87th Annual Conference this October!

Warm regards,

Dr. Monica Schroeder

President, American Association of School Personnel Administrators
Deputy Superintendent, North Shore School District 112, Highland Park, IL

UNCOVERING THE ROOTS:

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO RETAIN DIVERSE EDUCATORS

By Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor,
Director of Equity and Access,
Simsbury Public Schools,
Simsbury, CT

The American education system faces a critical challenge: a significant disparity between the increasingly diverse student population and the limited representation of diverse educators. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), the student population has become increasingly diverse, with the Hispanic or Latino population growing by 23% between 2010 and 2020. This demographic shift underscores the urgent need for a diverse educator workforce.

This is not only to reflect the changing demographics of our students, but also to provide all students with the opportunity to learn from educators with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

A diverse teaching staff is crucial for preparing students for a globalized world and fostering a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. However, research consistently demonstrates that teachers of color experience higher rates of attrition. For instance, the 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey conducted by the RAND Corporation found that 23% of Black teachers reported they were likely to leave their job at their school by the end of the 2022-2023 school year. Additionally, a 2021 report by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) found that teachers of color leave the profession at higher rates than white teachers, with turnover rates of 18.9%.

This high turnover rate among diverse educators is a significant concern. Diverse educators often enter the profession with a strong desire to support diverse student populations. However, they frequently encounter unique challenges that can impact their own emotional well-being. These challenges may include confronting microaggressions, experiencing feelings of isolation and facing the pressure to represent and advocate for their community within a system that may not always fully reflect their own experiences and perspectives.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is a root cause. It is not a recent phenomenon, it's a consequence of decades of systemic inequities that have historically excluded and continue to marginalize people from underrepresented backgrounds. The limited pipeline of diverse candidates is a consequence of barriers and harm.

The harm created by the historical displacement and disenfranchisement of Black educators following the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision, alongside the ongoing marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, Latinx communities and English Language Learners, has created a significant opportunity gap.

Recruitment plans often operate under the flawed assumption that they do not need to address the potential challenges diverse educators may face. This overlooks the fact that many prospective educators are already aware of these potential challenges and may be deterred by the

lack of transparency around how the district is addressing them. When candidates perceive that they will be expected to overcome these challenges alone, without adequate support or systemic change, it can create a sense of undue burden and discourage them from pursuing positions in certain schools or districts. Recruitment efforts can not ignore the 'elephant in the room'.

HIRING/SELECTION

Bias is a root cause. Bias within hiring committees significantly contributes to the underrepresentation of diverse educators. This bias often stems from a lack of diversity among committee members and insufficient training on identifying and mitigating various forms of bias, including implicit, cultural and confirmation biases.

Without adequate training and established protocols, interview processes may rely heavily on subjective criteria, such as "cultural fit" or "interpersonal skills," which can be interpreted differently across cultural backgrounds. This can lead to unintended biases in the hiring process, as committee members may unconsciously favor candidates who they perceive as "fitting" the existing school culture, often prioritizing those who appear to be a "good fit" with the existing staff. To ensure a fair and equitable hiring process, committee members must have the knowledge and tools necessary to recognize and address their own biases.

The interview process itself significantly influences a candidate's overall experience and their decision to accept a position. The interview environment plays a crucial role in shaping a candidate's perception of the school and their willingness to join the school community. A lack of diversity within hiring committees can inadvertently create an environment where diverse candidates may not feel fully comfortable sharing their perspectives and experiences, or they believe their unique contributions would not be valued and accepted. This can lead to situations where candidates may not fully disclose their skills, experiences and perspectives, making it difficult for hiring committees to accurately assess their qualifications and potential.

Schools and districts must create the conditions that enable hiring committees to engage in this critical work. This requires a commitment to ongoing professional development, fostering a culture of vulnerability and self-reflection within hiring teams and re-imagining a culture of "fit" for all.

ADVANCEMENT

Advancement barriers are a root cause. Diverse educators suffer from the lack of equitable access to leadership roles. This includes limited access to mentorship and sponsorship opportunities, where experienced leaders can guide and advocate for their career progression. Implicit biases can also influence promotion decisions, potentially overlooking or undervaluing the contributions of diverse educators. Furthermore, diverse educators may have limited access to leadership training and development opportunities, hindering their ability to acquire the necessary skills and experience for advancement.

This lack of equitable access to leadership roles can significantly impact the career trajectories of diverse educators, limiting their opportunities for growth and advancement within the education system. This not only hinders individual career progression, but also creates a sense of disenfranchisement and low morale among diverse educators. The lack of opportunities for advancement can also negatively impact recruitment efforts, as current employees may be less likely to recommend their district to prospective candidates.

ISOLATION

Isolation is a root cause. Research, such as the 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey conducted by the RAND Corporation, highlights the significant impact of isolation on teacher well-being and retention. For many teachers of color, the experience can be further compounded by the feeling of being the “only one” – the only person of color on the staff, in leadership roles and even in professional development settings. This isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, marginalization and a lack of support, contributing to higher turnover rates among diverse educators.

Limited professional development opportunities further exacerbate this issue. Many educators lack access to meaningful professional development that focuses on building inclusive and equitable classrooms, fostering respectful and supportive relationships among colleagues, and developing cultural competency.

FOSTERING BELONGING

Fostering a strong sense of belonging is critical for retaining diverse educators. When educators feel valued, respected and supported within their school communities, they are more likely to thrive and remain in the profession. Creating an inclusive and supportive environment where diverse educators can feel a sense of belonging is crucial for both their well-being and their ability to effectively serve students.

Cultivating a sense of belonging requires a commitment to fostering a culture of inclusion and respect, starting from the top of the organization. When diverse educators feel valued, their contributions are celebrated and they are supported in their professional growth, they are more likely to thrive and remain within the district. This not only enhances their well-being and job satisfaction, but also strengthens their commitment to the school community. Furthermore, a positive and inclusive school culture can serve as a powerful recruitment tool, attracting and retaining talented and dedicated educators from diverse backgrounds. When prospective educators witness a welcoming and supportive environment where diverse voices are valued, they are more likely to be drawn to the district and consider it a desirable place to work.

SENSE OF BELONGING

Fostering a sense of belonging is key, not only for retaining diverse educators, but also for enhancing the well-being and engagement of all staff. Research consistently supports this notion. Studies have shown that educators who feel a strong sense of community and belonging are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of stress and greater commitment to their profession.

When all educators, regardless of their background, feel valued, respected and supported, it creates a more positive and productive learning environment for both staff and students. This positive and inclusive environment benefits the entire school community, fostering stronger relationships, increased collaboration and a greater sense of shared purpose.

EXAMPLE OF FOSTERING BELONGING: SIMSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Simsbury Public Schools recognizes the importance of retaining a diverse workforce and has developed Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to create safe spaces for diverse educators to connect and support one another. These affinity spaces are supported by the creation of a model, “L.I.T.” (Legitimized, Intentional and Tenacious) which emphasizes providing time, space, resources and clear communication to ensure the success and sustainability of these groups.

Legitimized: Acknowledge and support ERGs as valuable resources for staff development, well-being and creating a more inclusive workplace. This includes providing time and space to meet.

Intentional: Actively promote and support the development and growth of these groups through dedicated

resources, mentorship and clear communication. This includes a mission statement, goals and alignment to the strategic operating plan of the district.

Tenacious: Continuously strive to improve and enhance the support provided to ERGs and their members, ensuring their long-term success and impact within the district. This includes maintaining systems and structures for sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Retaining and cultivating a diverse educator workforce requires a commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment where all educators feel valued and respected. This necessitates a multifaceted approach that prioritizes the following:

Dismantling Systemic Barriers: Proactively address and mitigate the impact of microaggressions, implicit bias and systemic inequities within the school environment. Create a culture of open dialogue and respectful discourse where all voices are heard and valued. Ensure equitable access to resources, professional development opportunities and leadership roles for all educators, regardless of their background.

Recognize and Value Unique Contributions: Acknowledge and appreciate the unique perspectives, experiences and contributions of diverse educators. Support educators in their efforts to build relationships with students and families, and provide adequate support and compensation for the extra time and emotional labor they may invest. Additionally, offer viable pathways toward advancement.

Foster a Sense of Belonging: Create opportunities for diverse educators to connect and build community with colleagues through mentorship programs, affinity groups and social events. Provide meaningful professional development opportunities that address the unique needs and experiences of diverse educators. Cultivate a school culture that celebrates diversity and values the contributions of all members of the school community.

The challenges of recruiting and retaining diverse educators hinder student learning and perpetuate systemic inequities. Addressing this challenge requires us to move beyond aspirational goals and acknowledge the need to address the root causes of this issue. We must create spaces where everyone shows up authentically, recognizing that fostering meaningful connections is key.



Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor is a compassionate leader with over two decades of experience in education, serving as a teacher, facilitator and principal.

As the Director of Equity and Access for Simsbury Public Schools, she supports administrators and business leaders in building strong teams and fostering inclusive environments.

Dr. Batchelor is a prominent voice in the education community, serving as the Co-Vice President for BLAC (Black Leaders and Administrators' Consortium), where she actively contributes to strategic planning and mentorship initiatives.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS BRING DIVERSITY AT LANGUAGE IMMERSION SCHOOL

By Dr. Anthony Graham, Chief Operating Officer, St. Louis Language Immersion School, St. Louis, MO

At the St. Louis Language Immersion School (SLLIS), diversity and innovation intersect to tackle one of the most pressing issues in education today: teacher shortages. With nearly half of its teaching staff coming from outside the United States, SLLIS leverages international talent to fill critical roles while enriching the educational experience for students. This year, the school welcomes educators from 18 countries across four continents who speak 15 languages.

SLLIS's dual-language immersion model enables students to learn core subjects in English and a target language—Spanish, French or Chinese—starting in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. The contributions of international teachers are essential to maintaining this immersive educational environment.

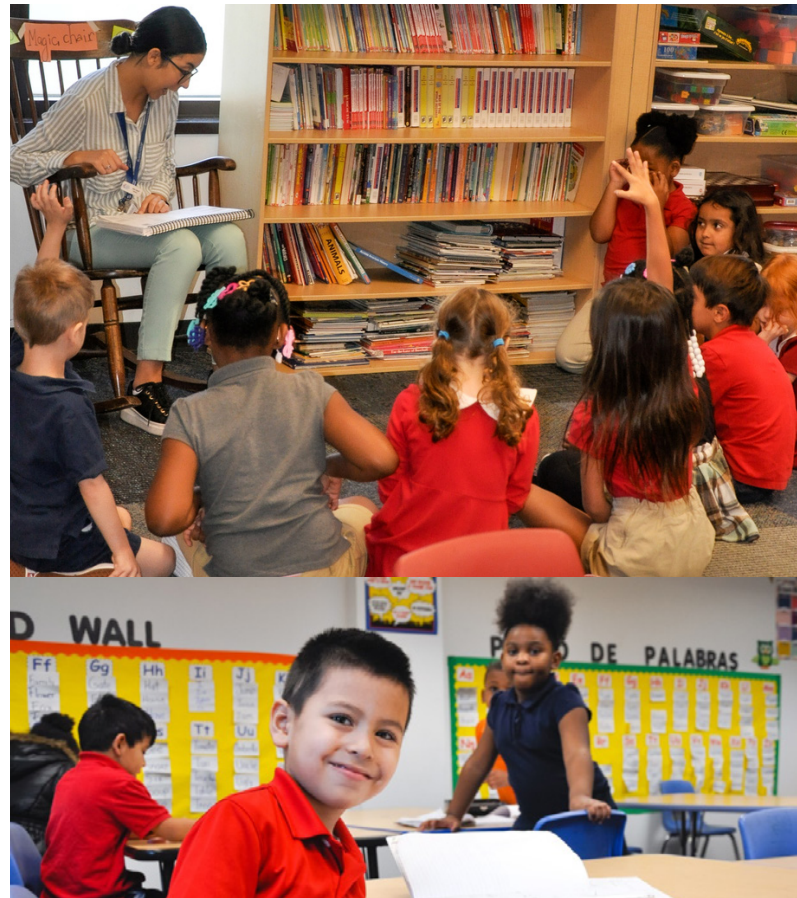
ADDRESSING TEACHER SHORTAGES THROUGH GLOBAL TALENT

Teacher shortages have become a nationwide challenge, with districts across the country struggling to recruit and retain qualified educators. By sponsoring international teachers through J-1 and H-1B visas, SLLIS fills critical roles and enhances the quality of education.

SLLIS's visa program allows qualified teachers to work in the United States for up to six years, promoting cross-cultural exchange while addressing workforce needs. SLLIS staff bring native fluency in their target languages and diverse cultural perspectives, making them invaluable assets to language immersion schools like SLLIS.

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

The presence of international educators at SLLIS ensures students gain more than language proficiency; they



acquire a global perspective. For instance, students in the Spanish program may learn from teachers from Venezuela, Spain, Panama, Mexico and Bolivia during their time at the school. The school's French and Chinese programs feature teachers from various countries, exposing students to diverse accents, dialects and cultural traditions.

This multicultural environment fosters cultural competence and prepares students to thrive in an interconnected world. The school's goal is to create well-rounded students with a global mindset.

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS

Navigating the logistics of hiring international staff requires significant effort. SLLIS typically begins recruiting in November and finalizes hires by mid-March to allow ample visa processing and relocation time. International teachers face challenges that many domestic hires do not, including obtaining visas, social security numbers and housing.



Get Involved

AASPA volunteers are a driving force in the development of new programs and services for members and for school personnel administrators.

WE WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR TALENTS!

From joining a Committee to presenting at an event or writing an article, there are so many ways to get involved!



SCAN HERE &
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want to get involved



SLLIS supports its international staff every step of the way. The school assists with apartment searches, financial setup, phone connectivity and transportation. A comprehensive welcome packet includes guidance on obtaining driver's licenses, finding grocery stores and accessing community resources.

Stephanie Diaz, a second-grade teacher who moved to St. Louis from Panama, highlighted the importance of this support. "The visa process was stressful, especially as a family, but SLLIS guided us through every step," Diaz said. "Without their help, I couldn't have made the move. I'm excited to share my culture with my students and build a classroom community."

A MODEL FOR DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION

By sponsoring J-1 and H-1B visas and actively recruiting international educators, SLLIS maintains a 100 percent staffing rate throughout the school year and creates a school environment that reflects the world's diversity. Over 53 percent of staff identify with a race other than white, making our school a leader in fostering inclusion and representation in education.

Named the 2024 Best Public Charter School in Missouri, SLLIS continues to thrive as a hub for global education

in St. Louis. The school's innovative approach ensures students receive an academically rigorous and culturally enriching education.

For more information about St. Louis Language Immersion School and its programs, visit www.sllis.org.



Dr. Anthony Graham currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer of the St. Louis Language Immersion School in St. Louis, Missouri. He brings over a decade of experience in education, working in diverse regions including Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Southern Illinois and rural Alaska. Dr.

Graham has taught every grade from Pre-K to sixth grade and has served as an Assistant Principal (K-8), Principal (ECC-8) and Central Office Administrator across various departments. He has also contributed to learning support centers, where he developed and implemented behavior and academic interventions for learners ranging from toddlers to adults.



Dr. Cherissa Legendre Vitter is an Associate Professor of IB Education at Southeastern Louisiana University and is responsible for teaching courses leading to the IB Educator Certificate in Teaching and Learning. She is the co-principal investigator for a federal Teacher Quality Partnership grant totaling five million dollars. Her areas of research are teacher evaluation, experiential learning online and cognitive coaching practices where she has been a presenter at national and international conferences.

LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE TEACHER RETENTION

By Dr. Cherissa Legendre Vitter, Associate Professor, International Baccalaureate Education, Edward Schlieder Endowed Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Teacher recruitment and retention are hot topics in the world of school personnel. School administrators are charged with finding highly qualified teachers, inducting them into the school culture and empowering them with professional development opportunities to retain qualified teachers and future leaders. This task does not need to fall on the human resource department alone. District partners, such as universities can assist with teacher recruitment and retention.

Southeastern Louisiana University was awarded a 5-million dollar Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant to partner with local districts supporting teacher induction, teacher retention and building leadership capacity. The purpose of the BRIDGE project (Building Rigorous Induction and Development for Growing All Educators) is to create a teacher induction program and train future leaders to support novice teachers.

The project Building Rigorous Induction and Development for Growing All Educators (BRIDGE), enhances the undergraduate teacher preparation program and designs induction programs to support novice teachers. The BRIDGE program focuses on building coherence across partner districts and programs designed to prepare and support teachers as they enter the profession. By strengthening the connection between K-12 and higher education institutions, partnerships more effectively prepare teacher candidates for the expectations of the classroom. Project partners collaborate to enhance and align the quality of preparation and induction by embedding research-based, effective principles into coursework, clinical practices and initial teacher support based on shared understanding and expectations of high-quality teaching and learning practices.

Southeastern is beginning the third year of this project. The project has provided district partners with valuable data to inform retention and professional development. This data also informs the curriculum in the teacher preparation program at the university. Most importantly, the data reveals how administrators view new teachers and how new teachers self-identify. Table 1 illustrates data collected from administrators regarding their perception of new teachers. Table 2 details the perception of new teachers regarding their own learning.

Table 1
What are the biggest challenges new teachers experience at your school?

AREA IDENTIFIED BY ADMINISTRATION	PERCENTAGE
Classroom Management	71%
Guided Curriculum/Content Knowledge	46%
Building Community Relationships	43%
Best Practices (engagement, differentiation, etc.)	32%
Supporting a Diverse Student Population	29%
Planning	29%
Managing Workload/Balance	25%

Table 2
Rate your confidence in the following skills

SKILL IDENTIFIED BY NEW TEACHER	CONFIDENT	SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	NOT CONFIDENT
Knowledge of content-specific teaching strategies	11%	78% (7)	11%
Knowledge of high-quality instructional materials (i.e. Eureka, ELA Guidebooks)	33%	33%	33%
Understanding of the state standards for your content area	11%	78% (7)	11%
Analyzing student work to determine mastery of skills	44%	56% (5)	0%
Setting goals and creating action plans	67% (6)	33%	0%
Implementing classroom management	11%	89% (8)	0%
Lesson planning	56% (5)	44%	0%
Collaborating/planning with other teachers	56% (5)	44%	0%
Understanding your school's policies and procedures	56% (5)	33%	11%
Working with school staff (principal, counselor, SPED coordinator, etc.)	67% (6)	22%	11%
Communicating with parents	22%	56% (5)	22%
Teaching students with exceptionalities/varying ability	11%	78% (7)	11%
Teaching English language learners	11%	33%	56% (5)
Reflecting on your instructional practices	44%	56% (5)	0%

Administrators identified classroom management and guided curriculum as the main deficiencies for new teachers. This correlates with the responses of the new teachers who identified being only somewhat confident (89%) in implementing classroom management strategies and somewhat confident (78%) in knowledge of content-specific teaching strategies/understanding the state standards. With this data, the partner districts paired new teachers with mentor teachers to enhance the areas of refinement. The university adjusted the curriculum in the corresponding classroom management and method courses.

By working in partnership, Southeastern Louisiana University and district partners have been able to bridge the gap between the teacher preparation program and the novice teacher.



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GUIDING HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERSHIP WITH A PORTRAIT OF AN EDUCATOR

By Josh Chambers, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Glenbard Township High School District 87, Glen Ellyn, IL

In 2020, Glenbard Township High School District 87 embarked on a transformative journey to define what effective teaching and leadership should look like in our district. Building on the success of our Portrait of a Graduate—an initiative that highlights core competencies like critical thinking, collaboration and self-empowerment for students—we recognized the need for a complementary vision for our employees.



This led to the creation of the Portrait of a Glenbard Educator, developed by a diverse committee of students, teachers, support staff, board members and administrators. This framework identifies six key competencies essential to achieving Glenbard’s goals: embracing diversity, demonstrating empathy, collaborating effectively, innovating in instruction, continuously adapting and advocating for student needs.

These competencies serve as aspirational ideals not only for classroom teachers but for all Glenbard employees. Together with the Portrait of a Graduate, they guide every aspect of our work including the human capital processes—from recruitment and evaluation to professional development—creating a consistent, values-driven standard that supports our mission to inspire and empower students as global citizens.

A TARGETED APPROACH TO HIRING AND RETENTION

At Glenbard, talent acquisition goes beyond filling vacancies; it’s about building a team that aligns with our vision. Our Portrait of an Educator informs how we assess candidates from the outset. For example, our interview process includes open-ended questions designed to assess alignment with core competencies. To gauge a candidate’s ability to embrace diversity, we might ask, “How have your experiences shaped the way you address the varied backgrounds and learning needs of your students?” Similarly, to assess their advocacy skills, we may ask, “Can you describe a time when you felt a student needed additional support or resources? What steps did you take to address their needs?” These questions give candidates a chance to share experiences, providing us with insight into how they embody Glenbard’s values.

To further enhance our recruitment efforts, we use data-driven approaches to monitor and support diversity. Clear goals and metrics ensure that our hiring practices are equitable and reflect the diversity of our student body. We assess not only recruitment rates but retention rates; we track trends, evaluate job satisfaction and address any challenges proactively. This holistic approach to the hiring and retention of adults has led to a district workforce that allows students to see themselves represented in the adults and feel more valued.

EVALUATION: REFLECTING GROWTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY

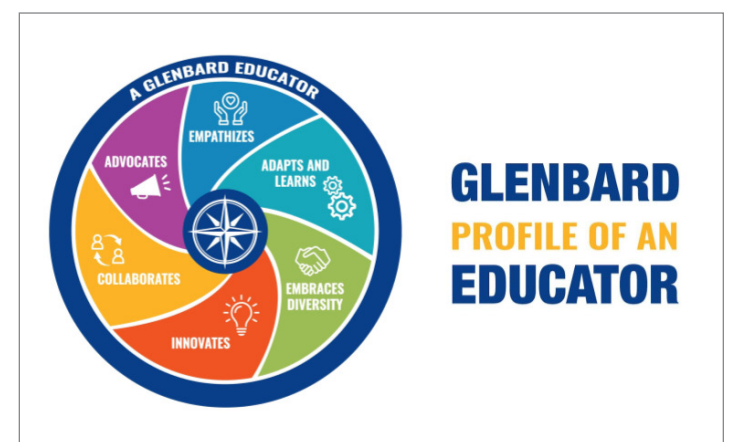
Our Portrait of an Educator is embedded in our educator evaluation process, providing a structured framework that drives professional growth. In partnership with the Danielson Framework, we created a tool that aligns these competencies with evidence-based teaching practices. The goal is not only to assess performance but to encourage growth, resilience and continuous improvement.

Our evaluation process has evolved over time. Initially, we mapped the portrait competencies to Danielson’s framework, allowing staff to see the alignment between these practices. Next, we integrated reflective, non-evaluative questions into pre-observation conferences. For example, we ask educators, “How do you help students develop the characteristics of Glenbard’s Portrait of a Graduate?” and “Which attributes of the Portrait of an Educator offer opportunities for your own professional growth?” These questions encourage self-reflection, alignment with district goals and allow for meaningful goal-setting. Finally, we incorporated Portrait of an Educator language directly into the evaluation rubric. This gradual approach helped staff understand and embrace the importance of the Portrait of an Educator, fostering a shared commitment to these standards.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ALIGNING GROWTH WITH DISTRICT GOALS

Professional development (PD) at Glenbard is carefully aligned with our Portrait of an Educator, Portrait of a Graduate and the Danielson Framework. By offering structured, research-based learning opportunities, we empower educators to thrive in today’s classrooms. Our PD program includes over 30 sessions annually, designed by educators to address real classroom needs. Each session is strategically aligned with one or more of our guiding frameworks, ensuring that professional learning is relevant and impactful.

Our PD framework is organized into three strands: “Embraces Diversity,” “Adapts and Learns” and “Innovates.” Educators are expected to complete activities within each strand over a five-year period, allowing them to build skills progressively and meaningfully. For example, in the “Embraces Diversity” strand, teachers participate in sessions focused on inclusive practices and cultural competency. Meanwhile, the “Innovates” strand encourages educators to explore new instructional methods and technologies. By linking PD with our competencies, we promote continuous improvement and





Teachers who have engaged with our competency-based hiring, evaluation and PD processes report increased confidence, adaptability and a stronger sense of purpose. These educators are well-equipped to support students in developing the skills outlined in our Portrait of a Graduate, from critical thinking and creativity to resilience and collaboration.

Our commitment to inclusive hiring and retention has had a measurable impact on student outcomes. Studies show that a diverse teaching staff can positively influence student engagement, self-confidence and academic performance. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion, Glenbard creates an enriching learning environment that ensures all students feel seen, valued and supported.

A BLUEPRINT FOR OTHER DISTRICTS

Glenbard's experience illustrates the transformative potential of a Portrait of an Educator. This framework has unified our HR practices, providing a common language and set of expectations that shape every stage of an educator's career. By aligning hiring, evaluation and professional development with district goals, we've developed a model for continuous improvement that benefits both educators and students.

For districts exploring similar approaches, the key is to start with a clear vision and involve a range of voices from the community. Developing a Portrait of an Educator requires input from diverse stakeholders to ensure it reflects the unique culture and values of the district. At Glenbard, we are proud to share our journey and encourage other districts to consider how a competency-based framework can elevate educational quality and equity.

keep educators engaged, motivated and adaptable. Glenbard's PD program is designed to meet the real-world needs of our staff. Sessions are offered during the school day, and we solicit input from educators on content and format to ensure relevance. This responsive approach not only addresses educators' current challenges but also prepares them to support student success in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

The Portrait of an Educator framework has established a culture of reflection that goes beyond formal evaluations and PD sessions. Regular check-ins with instructional coaches give teachers the opportunity to consider how their instructional practices are aligning with Glenbard's core competencies and identify areas for growth. This culture of reflective practice is reinforced by mentoring, instructional coaching and professional learning communities, which provide educators with a space to exchange best practices, troubleshoot challenges and celebrate successes.

New educators benefit from a structured induction program that introduces them to Glenbard's values and expectations. With mentoring from seasoned staff, new hires acclimate to the district's culture and build a strong foundation for success. These initiatives underscore our commitment to developing educators who embody the qualities outlined in our Portrait of an Educator and who are prepared to make a meaningful, lasting impact on students.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND SUCCESS STORIES

The impact of Glenbard's Portrait of an Educator is evident in the achievements of our students and educators.



Josh Chambers began his career as an educator with Chicago Public Schools through the Teach for Chicago program. His leadership journey in education has included positions as Dean of Students, Assistant Principal and Principal. Since 2014, he has served as the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources at Glenbard Township High School District

87, where he has been instrumental in developing and strengthening HR systems and processes.

An active leader in professional associations, Josh has held significant roles with the Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators (IASPA), including Chair of the IASPA Communications Committee, and with the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA), where he serves as Region 2 Representative on the Executive Board.



NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE SUMMIT

March 6 - 7, 2025
Anaheim, CA

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.

WHO IS INVITED

PK-12 Administrators / Higher Education Representatives / Agency & Department of Education Representatives / Teachers & Other Educators (e.g., specialized instructional support professionals like school psychologists, speech and language therapists, nurses, paraprofessionals)

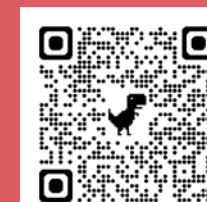
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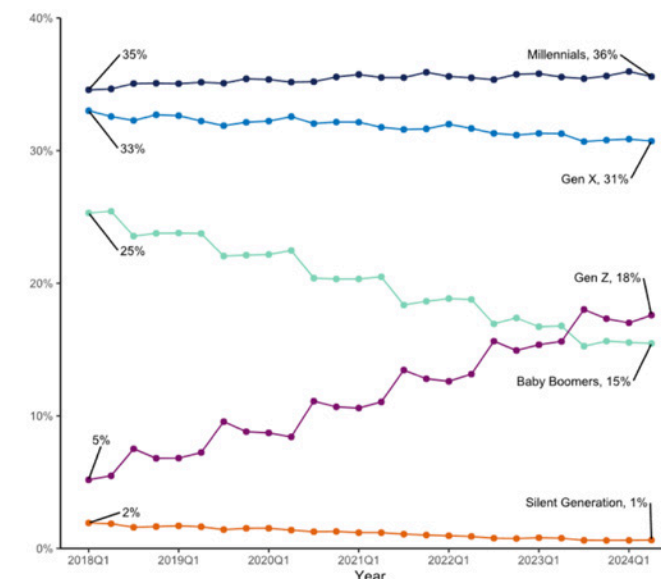
By Stephanie House,
Human Resources Manager, Kelso School District, Kelso, WA

If working in HR through the COVID-19 pandemic taught me anything, it is that you should never become static in your role as an HR professional. Strategic leadership requires constant change in the way we approach our work. During the “great resignation,” the importance of the recruitment, hiring and onboarding process was highlighted more each day. The workforce had all the power, and we had to figure out how to adjust. Failure to make adjustments to our processes and procedures would result in failure of our students, and that simply wasn’t an option.

As with many things in the public sector or government, change comes slow. With limited budgets, people and resources, public sector employers have to really decide what items will give them the most leverage when it comes to purchasing new software and changing processes and procedures. Couple this with the massive generational differences occurring in the labor market, the pandemic presented the perfect opportunity to reevaluate the ways in which we were recruiting employees in order to best meet the needs of the candidate pool.

In quarter 1 of 2018, Generation Z (born between 1997-2012) occupied about 5% of the workforce. By the end of quarter 2 of 2024, Gen Z had risen to 18% of the workforce. Meanwhile, in 2018, Baby Boomers had occupied 25% of the workforce, whereas in 2024, they only occupied 15%.

Generational share of the labor force



Source: analysis of CPS Basic Monthly Samples (2018–2024) accessed via IPUMS

For many years, school districts have been able to rely on a very traditional, “build it and they will come”, approach when it comes to recruiting and hiring. But with teacher shortages and changing demographics, this approach no longer works. We have to evaluate what we have always done and continually adjust to the labor market in order to recruit the best candidates to our organizations. Below are five steps to improve your recruitment process to accommodate a more competitive labor market.

1. THINK MOBILE

Nearly two-thirds of job applicants are using their mobile device to apply for jobs according to Appcast. This means as HR professionals, we need to look at our applicant tracking systems and ensure they are mobile friendly. If they are not, it is time to invest in something new. By making your applications mobile friendly, you will streamline the process for candidates and are more likely to attract young, new talent who are often utilizing mobile devices over computers.

This also means we need to look at our platforms for advertising our job postings. The days of just posting openings to our district’s website is gone. Think of who your target is for each specific job opportunity. School districts employ such a wide variety of people – from bus drivers, to nutrition services workers, to teachers and administrators. Your recruiting strategy cannot be one size fits all. You need to understand your local talent market and where it would make sense to advertise each position on a case-by-case basis.

2. THINK EASY

In addition to improving our application systems to better suit the labor market, we need to look at our actual applications and decide what information is absolutely vital to get from candidates upfront and what can wait until the interview process. Perhaps you are currently requiring a cover letter and multiple letters of recommendation. These items can often be a barrier to entry for many people in the education field. I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve been approached by a potential paraeducator or nutrition services worker who has been a stay-at-home mom for over 10 years and is re-entering the workforce. Do we really want these individuals to be excluded from our process because we have always required three letters of recommendation? ChatGPT can write an amazing cover letter for any job as long as the applicant has the job description on hand, so your organization will need to decide if this is an item that is going to help you in your decision making or if it is simply a hoop you are making candidates jump through with little to no gain on your organizations part.

The easier you make your application, the more likely people will complete the application. Really hone in on what your organization and hiring managers needs in each position’s application. If your application system allows you to set up different positions application requirements differently, do it! It pays off in the long-run.

3. THINK LOCAL

Gone are the days of traditional career fairs. I don't know about the rest of the country, but in the Pacific Northwest, we are still leaning heavily on in-person education career fairs to recruit teachers. While this might work for districts that are near larger cities where the career fairs are held, more rural districts outside of cities may find that a career fair doesn't prove lucrative. My district has found that we may be able to hire a person at a career fair in a big city, but the retention of that individual is usually about two years or less. They eventually end up moving to a district closer to a major city like Vancouver, Portland or Seattle.

Instead of focusing on the whole state or region as your labor market, focus more on who you can tap into locally that can connect you to people who love the area your district is in and want to stay there. Think local colleges and universities, PTO meetings, current paraeducators in your district; there are lots of opportunities at your fingertips that you may be forgetting!

One thing we have implemented in our District for the last three years is hosting an event called "Coffee and Careers." We rent out a local coffee shop for the evening and invite teacher candidates to come meet with District leadership. We send invitations to all the local teaching programs or programs that we host student teachers from. We also advertise on social media and on the radio. Candidates get to order a 16 oz drink of their choice, paid for by the District, and just come mix and mingle with various leaders from our District. It is a very informal event that we have had immense success at! We have hired the majority of our new teachers for the last several years from this event. The best part about it is, they love our community and they want to stay with us!

Think of ways you might be able to engage your local community in hiring. Maybe you can go to each school's PTO meeting and discuss paraeducator openings and opportunities, or maybe you invite all your paraeducators to a meeting with several local teaching programs – the opportunities are limitless!

4. THINK LONG-TERM

As with all hiring, we should always be thinking long-term. Succession planning should be a huge part of each district's and each school's strategic plan. Principals should pipeline excellent paraeducators into teaching programs. Our best teachers should be pipelined into principal programs. Custodians should be trained to move up to leads, nutrition services dishwashers should be trained to move on to be the school lead. By thinking long-term we save ourselves time and money on training and turnover.

District leaders should always evaluate staff according to their actual skills and successes. They should also always partner with Human Resources when they have excellent employees who they would love to see in other roles. I have coached many paraeducators that are interested in teaching programs on the various routes to teacher certification in Washington. These people have been directly relayed to me by school leaders and have become some of our best special education teachers.

"By embracing innovative approaches like mobile-friendly applications, streamlined processes and localized outreach, we can remain competitive in a rapidly shifting labor market."

By tapping into our current talent pool to fill hard-to-fill or leadership roles, we can save so much time and money and hit the ground running with new initiatives.

The world of recruitment has changed dramatically, and HR professionals in the education

sector must keep pace to attract and retain high-quality staff. By embracing innovative approaches like mobile-friendly applications, streamlined processes and localized outreach, we can remain competitive in a rapidly shifting labor market. Additionally, investing in long-term strategies, such as succession planning and internal talent development, ensures the sustainability of our workforce.

Ultimately, our ability to adapt directly impacts the quality of education we provide. It's not just about filling positions—it's about building a team of dedicated professionals who align with our district's mission and values. Now is the time to reflect, reevaluate and take action. Let's prioritize strategic recruitment and create a future where our students, staff and communities thrive together.



Stefanie House is an experienced Human Resources Manager with over a decade of experience in K-12 education. She currently serves as HR Manager for the Kelso School District in Washington State, where she leads innovative hiring, onboarding and retention strategies to support educational excellence.

In 2022, Stefanie was honored as the Kelso Longview Chamber of Commerce K-12 Classified Employee of the Year, recognizing her exceptional contributions to fostering a positive workplace culture and supporting the District's mission and vision. She is an active member of the Lower Columbia College Education Advisory Committee, collaborating with local leaders to align educational initiatives with workforce needs. Stefanie also plays a key role on the Kelso School District's AI Implementation Committee, leveraging emerging technologies to enhance HR processes and improve organizational efficiency.



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CONNECTING PURPOSE TO PRACTICE:

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION IN UNDERSTANDING YOUR WHY

By Dr. Thomas Brewster,
Assistant Director of Human Resources, Montgomery County Public Schools,
Christiansburg, VA



In his video presentation, comedian Michael Jr. explores the transformative power of understanding one's "why." He illustrates this concept with a memorable interaction from an event where he invites a music teacher to sing the opening lines of Amazing Grace. The teacher delivers a technically flawless performance, showcasing a rich, resonant baritone. Michael Jr. then challenges the teacher to sing the same piece again, this time imagining deeply emotional circumstances, such as the release of a family member from prison. The resulting performance is profoundly moving, infused with emotion and depth that captivate the audience. Michael Jr. drives the point home with a powerful insight: "When you know your 'why,' your 'what' becomes more impactful, as it aligns with your purpose".

This video has become a cornerstone of my approach to employee orientation within our school system. Sharing it with new employees serves as a potent reminder of our strategic vision and encourages staff to connect deeply with the purpose behind their work. More than just a motivational tool, the video is a call to action, urging individuals to approach their roles with intentionality and to understand the profound impact they can have when driven by a clear sense of purpose.

ALIGNING PURPOSE WITH VISION

A strategic vision is essential in aligning the efforts of educators and support staff with the broader goals of an institution. A well-defined vision provides a framework for employees to connect their personal "why" to the mission of the organization, ensuring that every action is intentional, purposeful and student-centered.

Michael Jr.'s message resonates deeply with me because it mirrors my own journey in education and the example set by my mother. Raised in a single-parent home, I witnessed my mother's unwavering dedication to her role as a secretary in the maintenance department of our local school division. Her connection to her "why" was evident in everything she did.

For my mother, her work went far beyond typing letters or answering phones. It was about creating an environment where children could learn and thrive. She understood that ensuring a school's heating system functioned wasn't just a task—it was a responsibility tied to the well-being and success of students. Her clarity of purpose shaped her attitude, inspired those around her and left a lasting impact on her community.

Reflecting on her career, I am reminded that understanding one's "why" not only influences what we do but also how we do it. Years later, Michael Jr.'s video reinforced this lesson, reminding me that purpose drives performance. This belief continues to guide my leadership and underscores the importance of staying grounded in a clear sense of purpose.

CULTIVATING PURPOSE IN EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Incorporating Michael Jr.'s video into employee orientation emphasizes the importance of connecting personal purpose to institutional vision. It challenges new staff members to reflect on their own "why" and consider how it aligns with our school division's goals. This exercise goes beyond motivation; it fosters a culture where intentionality and purpose shape every action.

My mother's legacy serves as a poignant reminder: when employees are deeply connected to their "why," they bring their best selves to work. This connection not only benefits individual employees, but also strengthens the broader school community, ensuring the success of our students. By helping staff members discover their purpose, we create an environment where every contribution matters and aligns with our mission of nurturing and educating the next generation.



Dr. Thomas Brewster serves as the Assistant Director of Human Resources for Montgomery County Public Schools. With an extensive career in education, he has held roles as a teacher, principal, university professor, and superintendent. Dr. Brewster has led state and national initiatives on workforce readiness and graduation rates and has chaired Virginia's Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy.

His accolades include Pulaski County's Business Executive of the Year and inductions into multiple halls of fame. A Southwest Virginia native, Dr. Brewster holds degrees from Bluefield University, Radford University and Virginia Tech. His service extends to various boards, including Virginia's State Board of Education, Virginia's State Community College Board, Communities In Schools of Virginia and Radford University's Board of Visitors.

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I'M NOT REALLY AN A**H***

CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF THE HR DEPARTMENT

By Chris Mauger, Director of Classified Personnel & Chris Seybert, Director of Certificated Personnel, Hesperia Unified School District, Hesperia, CA

*A hard truth we have to accept in our role as HR administrators is that we're often cast as the villain. The hammer. Some people have even gone so far as to use the word "a**h***" from time to time. But we all know that's a gross distortion of reality—if not an outright lie—because most of us HR folks are not a**h***s. In fact, we're pretty decent people.*

We're just misunderstood.

For those of us who started our administrative careers at school sites, the transition into human resources can be a shock. Take the role of an elementary principal, for example. Students are usually thrilled to see you. A walk through the cafeteria brings shouts of greeting, high fives and provocative questions from first graders ("Mr. Mauger! Would you rather fight a T-Rex or a pterodactyl?"). It's like being a Beatle without the haircuts and yeah-yeah-yeahs.

Now, contrast that with the arrival of the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Instead of joy and adoration, your presence is often met with fear and terror, like the Godfather just stalked into the conference room. This article aims to help HR administrators find the middle ground between Paul McCartney and Vito Corleone.

WHY THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTION?

Let's be honest. It's not hard to understand why employees might view HR in a negative light. After all, a key part of the job involves disciplinary actions, up to and including termination. No one's sending us a "thank you" card for a letter of reprimand or giving us a standing ovation after we inform probationary employees that their services are no longer required.

As Riggs said in *Lethal Weapon 2*, "It's a dirty job, but someone's gotta do it."

Then there's the bargaining table. Even in districts with positive relationships between administration and unions, negotiations can turn adversarial. HR is accused of everything from "hiding the money" to "refusing to pay teachers what they're worth" to "demeaning the hard work of dedicated employees." Some of that is simply tactics, but it just serves to perpetuate the "HR as the enemy" narrative.

Adding to the challenge is the "spin" often employed during contentious negotiations. Union leadership may use strategic (read: diabolical) messaging to rally public support—or rile up employees and board members. And sometimes, even innocent gestures can backfire spectacularly.

A STORY ABOUT SANDWICHES

Hesperia, California. January 2022. Amid a global pandemic, schools were struggling to return to in-person learning. This created staffing chaos, requiring creative solutions like teachers taking extra students, classified staff subbing in other roles and prep periods sacrificed to cover classes.

Our HR team reached out to local businesses for donations and held a raffle as a way to recognize the extra efforts of our staff. Prizes included \$500 Amazon gift

cards, \$250 Best Buy certificates and gift cards from other local businesses. We also partnered with Jersey Mike's and personally delivered sandwiches to every school and department over a three week period. It was a small gesture of gratitude during an extraordinarily stressful time. Unfortunately, it was also contract negotiation season. One bargaining group turned our goodwill into a PR nightmare. Employees showed up at board meetings with signs proclaiming, "I'M WORTH MORE THAN A SANDWICH!" and "MORE PAY, FEWER RAFFLES!" Social media comments were...let's call it "unpleasant."

If a meatball sub can incite a rebellion, you can only imagine what we're up against in the normal course of business.

HOW DO WE CHANGE THIS?

Step one is self-awareness. We know we're not the villains, but we need to recognize the perception exists and actively work to connect with employees outside of disciplinary meetings or negotiation sessions.

Given the nature of HR, it's easy to become jaded when faced with grievances, misconduct and general negativity. After the sandwich debacle, our team was frustrated and angry. But we took a step back and realized the vocal, sign-wielding minority didn't represent the entire workforce. That shift in perspective helped us stay positive and avoid sinking into an adversarial mindset. To quote Yoda, "Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny. Consume you, it will."

Instead of letting outrage consume us, let's build positive relationships with teachers and classified staff by meeting them on their turf and engaging personally. It's those small, human connections that can begin to dispel the notion that HR is "out to get you."

STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH STAFF

First and foremost, connecting with our employees requires intentionality and focus. Schedule our visits and conversations, and treat them as "sacred time." Without that level of commitment, it's all too easy for these interactions to slip through the cracks. Building a positive culture usually doesn't feel urgent, but it is always important.

The tips below may seem straightforward, but even the best intentions can get lost in the daily whirlwind if we're not careful.

Be Visible and Meet People: Make it a priority to visit school sites for reasons beyond disciplinary investigations or the occasional "here's what you need to know" meeting. Sure, those things are necessary, but if the only time employees see the HR team is when there's been an "incident," their natural reaction will be to fear the worst.



We love showing up to welcome new employees, present awards or just connect with the amazing people who make up our district. After all, “human resources” is about all the humans, not just the ones who get called on the carpet. So get out and spread some positivity, and remind people that the HR team is human too (Spoiler Alert: We do smile. Occasionally. On Fridays.).

Interact Positively: While it can be challenging to maintain a positive approach when emotions run hot, taking the high road is never the wrong decision. Start by assuming positive intentions from employees and union leadership. Even if their actual intentions occasionally lean more toward “let’s see what we can get away with here,” this mindset helps keep our approach professional and reasonable when our instincts nudge us in a different direction.

Giving people the benefit of the doubt is another solid strategy—when it’s reasonable, of course. Notice we didn’t say “whenever possible,” because technically, it’s always possible. But if someone’s work history includes repeat misconduct, habitual unprofessionalism or willful dishonesty, handing out endless benefits of the doubt can undermine your position.

Disagreements will happen, but it’s important to be able to “disagree without being disagreeable.” One standout example in our district is a colleague we’ll call “Isaac” (because, well, that’s his name). Isaac can completely disagree with your ideas while maintaining a productive, non-argumentative conversation. You’ll walk away knowing he thinks you’re off-base, but you’ll also feel listened to and respected. It’s a skill worth cultivating because, in the middle of tense negotiations, the “I’m right, and you’re an unreasonable jerk” isn’t an effective way to reach an agreement.

Communicate Like a Pro: Yes, we get it—the suggestion that effective communication contributes to a positive culture isn’t the biggest “a-ha!” you’re going to get from this article. But when employees are asked about

leadership at their school site, “communicate better” is still one of the most common responses. The basics are straightforward: make sure you’re getting information to the people who need to know. But beyond that, consider sharing as much information with the entire staff as is appropriate (with obvious exceptions—confidentiality isn’t just a “guideline”). Even when specifics don’t apply to everyone, no one likes to feel like they’ve been left out of the loop. Transparency is also critical, particularly when working with bargaining units. We don’t like to get blindsided, and neither do they. Playing “gotcha” only leads to distrust and adversity. Basic negotiating strategy aside, being honest and open with information builds trust and long-lasting harmony.

APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION

One of our favorite mantras in Hesperia Unified’s personnel department is this: “You can’t build a positive culture around negative people.” If all you’re doing is responding to the complaints of the perpetually disgruntled (admit it—you’ve got a name or two in mind), you’ll never elevate your team to greatness. Chronic complainers will keep complaining while your superstars either fade into the background or—worst case scenario—take their talents elsewhere.

Instead, focus on what your most effective people need to thrive. Then do more of that. Acknowledge them not just for what they accomplish, but for who they are. Here’s how we’re putting this philosophy into action:

Employees of the Year: Every year, all of our schools and departments select a Teacher of the Year and a Classified Employee of the Year. During our annual all-district kickoff event in August, the site honorees are called onstage to receive their awards. Additionally, from these candidates we select a Districtwide winner in each category.

Recognition for Promotions: Whenever a classified employee is promoted to a higher classification, our HR department sends the employee a congratulatory note along

with a Starbucks gift card. It’s a small gesture, but letting the employees know that their hard work has been noticed is another way to lay the foundation for a positive district culture. Besides, who doesn’t appreciate a free latte?

Employee Spotlight: Every April, we ask sites and departments to pick one teacher and one classified employee who’ve been flying “under the radar”, but making a big impact. These unsung heroes are featured on our district’s social media pages throughout the month.

Letters from HR/Employee of the Month: At the start of the school year, we meet with administrators and supervisors to discuss their personnel goals and identify their MVPs. Our HR team then writes formal appreciation letters to those employees, and these letters are added to their personnel files. From this group, we select a Teacher and Classified Employee of the Month to receive awards at their site staff meetings.

In short, the more we celebrate our superstars and unsung heroes, the more we build a culture that others want to be a part of. When you focus on the positive, the negative starts to become nothing more than background noise.

WE STILL HAVE TO DO THE HARD THINGS ... RIGHT?

While it would be awesome if our HR responsibilities were solely focused on presenting awards, expressing gratitude and engaging with the best of the best, the fact of the matter is that the dirty work still needs to be done. Using the strategies we covered earlier, you’ll be able to remain positive and optimistic even while engaging in the more difficult aspects of the job.

Discipline with Compassion: No one looks forward to an investigatory meeting with an employee accused of egregious misconduct. The employee is often nervous (and sometimes less than truthful), their representative may channel his inner Grisham novel defense attorney and the entire situation has the potential to become tense and argumentative.

We need to remind ourselves that just because certain people may be substandard employees, it doesn’t mean they’re bad people. (Probably not, anyway. Benefit of the doubt, as we discussed earlier.) The ultimate goal of discipline isn’t to write people up or fire them—it’s to improve performance or change behavior.

Of course, terminations happen when warranted, but even then, we can’t lose sight of the human element. Being flippant or callous during the process doesn’t just hurt the employee involved, it can erode trust and morale

throughout the district because, you know, people talk. The reality is, we’re dealing with someone’s livelihood—a responsibility that requires respect and sensitivity.

By focusing on the person behind the behavior, you’ll find it easier to stand by the tough decisions you make. Having compassion doesn’t mean letting people slide; it means handling tough situations with the professionalism and humanity our employees deserve. Finding that balance is how you ensure your leadership has a positive impact, even in the toughest situations.

Sugar-coating is for Donuts, Not Documentation: That brings us to our second favorite mantra in HUSD, “Sugar-coating is for donuts, not documentation.” If we’re serious about improving employee performance through evaluations or disciplinary actions, honesty and accuracy are essential. For example, if an employee earns a Letter of Reprimand for using profanity toward students, the write-up must be precise—F-bomb for F-bomb.

(Side note: We once had an employee claim he wasn’t sure what constituted “profanity.” The directives in the ensuing Letter of Reprimand included an application of the phrase “including but not limited to” that would’ve made George Carlin proud.)

The same rule applies to evaluations. Sure, we all want to see the best in our team members, but rating employees as “meeting expectations” when they’re clearly not isn’t kindness—it’s a disservice. Without clear and honest feedback, employees don’t know where they need to improve. And if their performance eventually escalates to the point of disciplinary action, vague or overly generous evaluations won’t hold up as supporting documentation. Remember, documentation is about clarity, fairness and setting everyone up for success (or, in some cases, laying the groundwork for your disciplinary process). Sugar-coat your donuts all you want, but when it comes to paperwork, keep it real.

Negotiate Fairly and Reasonably: Let’s cut to the chase. There’s a difference

between employing negotiation strategy and just being sneaky and oppositional. Starting with a lowball offer? That’s fair game. Lying about your district’s financial situation to manipulate negotiations? Absolutely not.

If your Chief Business Officer is fortunate enough to work with a bustling budget, but financial obligations limit what the district can offer, just say that. Will it slow things down or irritate the bargaining unit, probably, but honesty now can help mitigate years of distrust and smoldering animosity later.

“By focusing on the person behind the behavior, you’ll find it easier to stand by the tough decisions you make. Having compassion doesn’t mean letting people slide; it means handling tough situations with the professionalism and humanity our employees deserve.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

There's probably no getting around the fact that we HR administrators are going to be viewed as the bad guy most of the time. It's practically in the job description. But while discipline, negotiations and legal battles are unavoidable and essential aspects of what we do, we can't let those duties overshadow our obligation to connect with and celebrate our employees. Take the time to recognize their

contributions and remind them how much we value who they are—not just what they do.

And just as importantly, give them the chance to see us for who we really are. Sure, we may never be hailed as caped crusaders of the school district, but it would be great to overhear someone in passing say: "Hey, see that HR guy over there? He's not really an a**h*** after all."



Chris Mauger serves as the Director of Personnel for the Hesperia Unified School District in Southern California, a district dedicated to educating 22,500 students and supporting a workforce of 1,100 teachers and 1,200 classified staff members.

With a 30-year career in education, including 25 years as an administrator, Chris has cultivated a passion for fostering positive school and district culture. Before joining HUSD's personnel team, he honed his leadership skills as an elementary teacher, site assistant principal and elementary principal, always focused on creating environments where students and staff thrive.



Chris Seybert is a seasoned leader and speaker with a passion for people. He has had the amazing opportunity to serve in leadership roles in education and the private sector. Chris has been a teacher, coach and has spent more than 10 years as a

secondary administrator. Currently, Chris has the privilege of serving as the Director of Personnel for Hesperia Unified School District. He loves spending time with his wife and four children, living out the many adventures that life has to offer.



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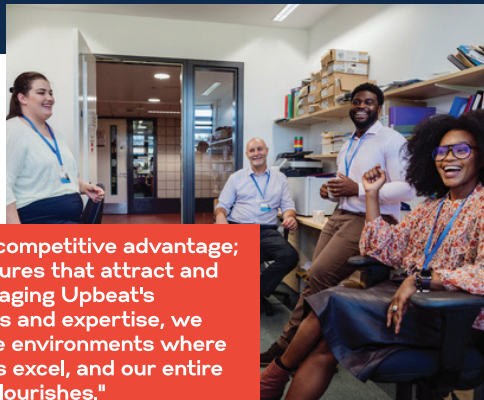
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AASPA's 2025 Equity in Action Summit is a two-day event developed for school leaders who are seeking to increase their knowledge of leadership, recruitment, selection and retention of under-represented individuals in PK-12. This event joins colleagues from across the country to share diverse perspectives and embrace change. An equitable workforce plays a significant role in making the work environment more peaceful and inspiring.

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Trainings prepare participants to become a Certified Professional Human Capital Leader in Education (pHCLE). All learning aligns to the updated HCLE Professional Standards/Body of Knowledge. The professional-level standards outline the competencies that leaders in PK-12 and related organizations need to strategically manage human capital processes at the department, team or individual level.



VIRTUAL CLASS SCHEDULES/TIMES FOR 2025:

July 10-August 21, 2025 (Thurs. 11:00 am - 12:30 pm ET)
September 23-November 11, 2025 (Tues. 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm ET)

2025 TESTING WINDOWS

- * March 10-31, 2025 (Registration Deadline: March 6)
- * June 10-30, 2025 (Registration Deadline: June 6)
- * October 20-November 21, 2025 (Registration Deadline: October 15)

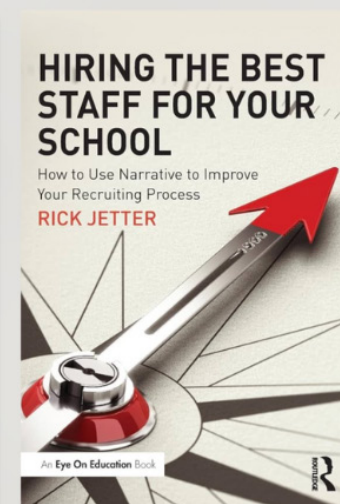
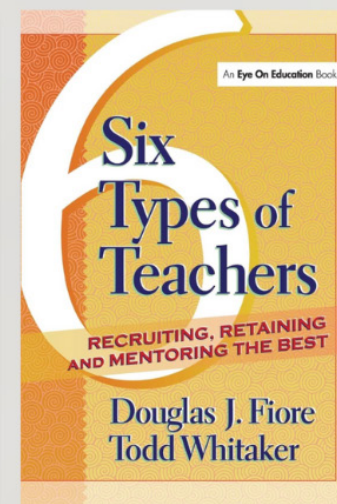
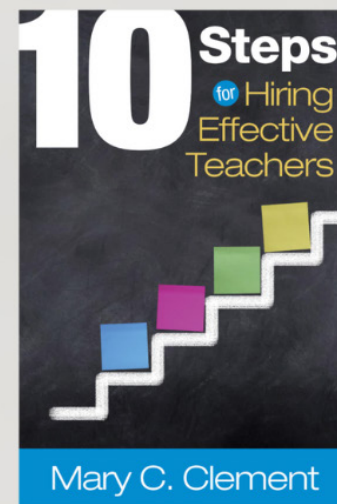
For more info
SCAN HERE!



FEBRUARY BOOKS of the Month

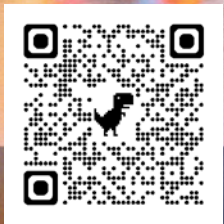
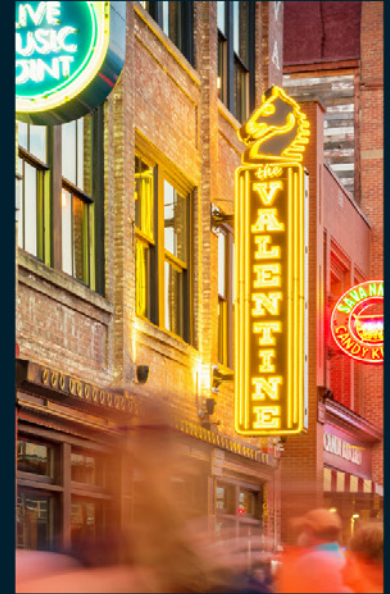
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TUNING INTO TALENT

live from Nashville



SAVE THE DATE

AASPA's 87th Annual Conference

OCTOBER 7 – 10, 2025

Registration opens March 3rd!