

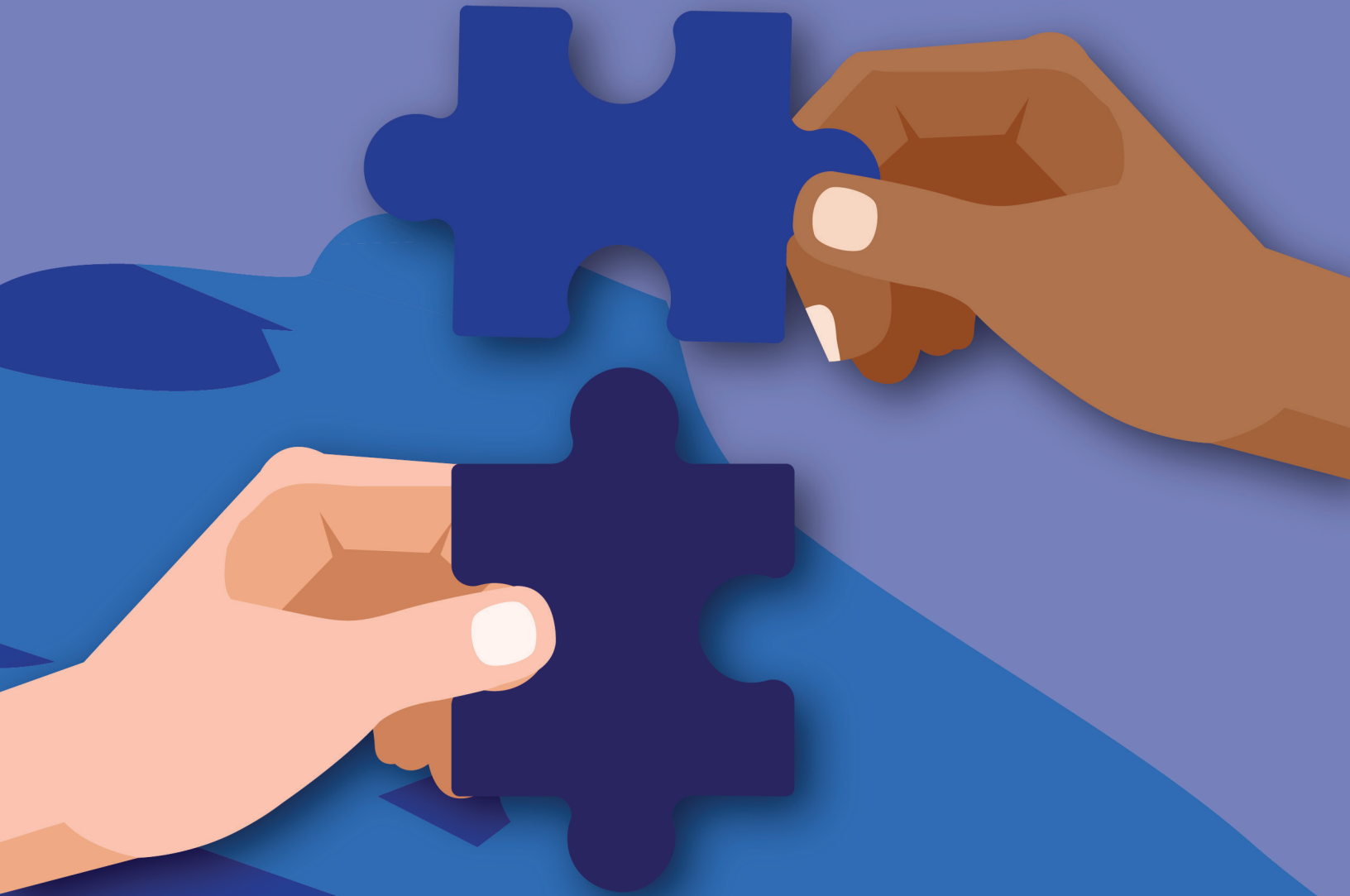
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THE COMPASS

DIRECTION FOR HR LEADERS IN EDUCATION



Building the Future

From networking to teacher recruitment to district culture, 2023 is about building the future



American Association of School Personnel Administrators | Est. 1938

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

From the Desk of Dr. Dale Fisher, AASPA President



Here we are, a full month into 2023, and on behalf of the AASPA Executive Board I want to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt greetings for the year ahead and let you know how much we appreciate your K-12 HR expertise and all of your efforts and accomplishments over the previous year. Last year was a momentous year for AASPA and I thank one and all for the support and dedication you provide to our organization. I value all that you do for students and staff throughout our country, but more importantly, what we do to support each other.

Those who know me well, know that I am not a fan of resolutions. In fact, the only thing I resolve each year is to get the year correct on all formal HR documentation. It's a victory in my books if you can make it to February without screwing it up! However, I am

ALWAYS committed to growth in my profession. Now I realize that can mean many things to different people. What I consider a small improvement, may be a great show of growth for someone else. We all have different acquired strengths and we also have opportunities to expand our skillset. One person growing by leaps and bounds in an area that someone else already has an established skillset within can look very different. Quite frankly, that's where the strength of an organization like AASPA comes into play.

AASPA is a value-added organization which provides everything you need to heavily invest in your professional growth and development. The organization will always be committed to cutting edge training, industry insights and networking opportunities designed to help you grow and evolve in our industry. With little doubt, when you join and become actively involved in AASPA, you are putting yourself on the cusp of emerging trends in the field of K-12 human resources.

Opportunities such as the recent National Educator Shortage Summit, upcoming Boot Camps and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit are highly effective growth opportunities designed to expand your skillset and increase the impact of your department. The feedback on the quality of these professional development opportunities is extremely high and impactful. I can't emphasize enough that you should consider attending and/or offering to present. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't extend an invitation for you to join us in October of 2023 for our Annual Conference in Anaheim, California. The conference serves as the pinnacle professional development and networking opportunity for K-12 HR professionals. Until then, if I can be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

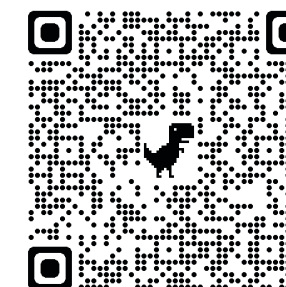
Warm Regards,

Dr. Dale Fisher
AASPA President

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CULTURE & RETENTION: THE RECIPE FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

by Sami Baugh, Chief Talent Officer;
Distinctive Schools; Chicago, IL

Creative recruitment starts with retention. Beginning with the role of company culture, Distinctive Schools has made strategic investments to reimagine the staff experience through thoughtful reflection, staff voice and collaborative investment.

Founded in 2011, Distinctive Schools was designed to disrupt and transform public education – we were looking for change and for something better; to provide innovative opportunities to students regardless of their zip code – to place families in the driver’s seat.

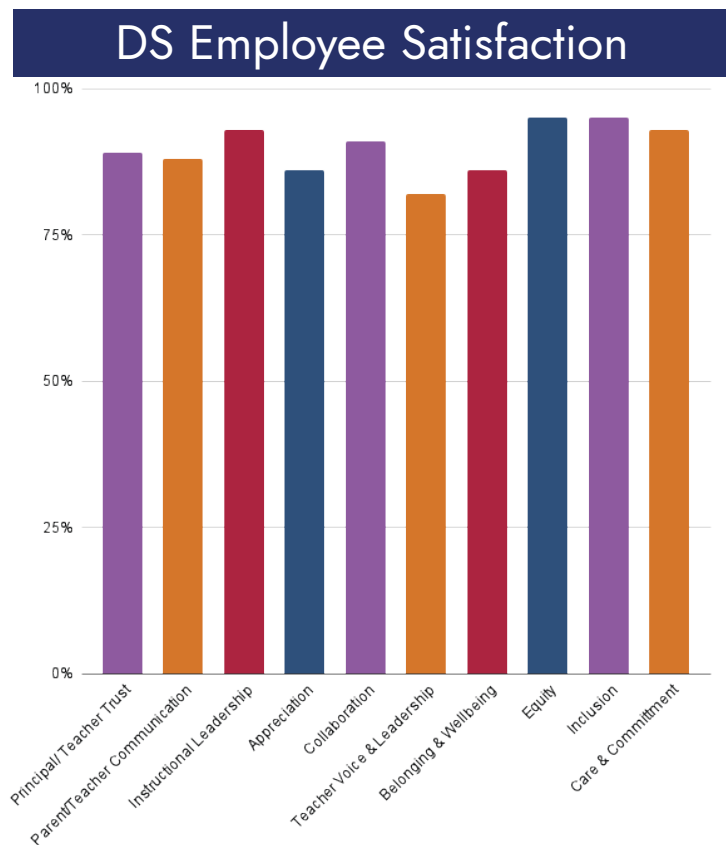
In 2011, we began redesigning schools with stakeholders, families, students and staff at the center of our design. We began designing a personalized learning model that has become a national movement, starting with relationships, trust, listening and moving into 21st century classrooms and schools of the future – learner profiles, competency based progression, flexible learning environments and personalized learning plans.

Everything we do is in service of student learning. In order to continue to push forward and continue this work, our need to recruit and retain excellent staff is paramount. Amidst a nationwide teacher shortage, we found ourselves asking the question “how can we achieve this?”

In thinking about creative recruitment, we believe the first step is in considering culture. A strong company culture attracts strong talent and creative recruitment begins with retention.

At Distinctive Schools, culture is at the heart of everything we do. Our motto is “By, For and With Teachers and Staff”. We recognize the value every single member of our team brings to our campuses, including instructional staff, non-instructional staff, full time and part time roles – it takes a team working together to make our schools the best possible places to learn and grow. Our goal is to create a non-hierarchical environment when it comes to voice and input from our community; every team member’s individual experience is vital in creating the most innovative, joyful, rigorous learning environment we can. By incorporating voice and perspective from all areas of our organization, we are co-constructing a strong culture, building our environment together and creating a rich sense of belonging.

Historically, school improvement efforts have primarily focused on test scores while neglecting the social components of a school's culture, such as trust and commitment. Through comprehensive surveys in combination with Expanded Design Team opportunities – we are able to change that reality. Our staff surveys act as formative assessments and allow us to hear from staff across each of our campuses directly. These survey results are used to build out our plans for growth and improvement at the campus and organizational level.



Expanded Design Teams allow us to dive even deeper, we are committed to giving staff a seat at the table where decisions are made. In these meetings, leadership and staff discuss things like career paths and compensation, strategic planning, New Teacher Institute practices, family leave, benefits and more. In practicing these strategies, we allow for transparency around decision making and actually implement the input we receive. This is integral in building trust across our network. We are, of course, better together.

Another key factor in retaining exceptional talent is opportunity for growth. Leaders in any field are highly motivated individuals, always searching for ways to expand their skills and learn new things. We are an educational organization, including our staff. Distinctive Schools is committed to developing and nurturing its teachers and leaders, striving to support both personal and professional growth through mentorship, coaching and collaboration. We believe strongly in the importance of building positive and optimistic working and learning culture and rely on

the development of meaningful relationships to propel the important work of school transformation. We honor and celebrate the work in all areas of the organization and aim to support all Distinctive Schools educators in any way we can through conversation, transparency and coaching. We provide dedicated weekly time for professional development across all campuses, as well as daily collaboration opportunities to provide support in co-planning and data analysis. Staff are encouraged to attend and present for external professional development opportunities as well. Our instructional coaching and mentor model allows for seasoned educators and new educators alike to work together, creating an environment of consistent support. The education landscape has changed tremendously over the course of the last several years. The COVID-19 pandemic upended a lot of existing systems; by intentionally creating a culture of collaboration and support, we continue to pave a new path forward for education.

We have spent the last two years building the Distinctive Career Path and overhauling our compensation practices to ensure parity throughout the organization. The Distinctive Career Path outlines ways team members can progress into larger leadership roles within the network. In just one year since full implementation, we have seen a 19% increase in satisfaction around compensation and career pathways. We strive to invest in those who have invested in us, always looking to find ways to say 'yes'. We intentionally seek ways to elevate our diverse workforce, identifying needs and bringing them to internal talent before hiring externally, giving teachers opportunities for growth projects outside the classroom, focusing on data driven work and continued leadership development. The most important factor in this kind of scaffolding is ensuring that we compensate staff for additional work. Some opportunities we offer beyond the classroom include stipended roles in campus social media management, before and after school activities and recruitment based projects. Staff are also eligible to earn bonuses based on meeting campus performance goals in areas of Deeper Learning, Knowledge and Skills, Equity and Access and Culture. Specific goals are shared with each campus annually, a model that provides another opportunity for growth within Distinctive Schools.

In order to build and sustain an excellent team, an organization needs a strong foundation. Constructing

this foundation together while upholding equity of voice creates a sense of belonging, where staff truly believe in the work that they are doing – their fingerprints are visible in the work, as they created it. This builds retention and creates a strong reputation to draw in more talent. Strong school and organizational culture, professional growth opportunities and amplifying team member voices provide the foundation for continued success in recruitment and retention.



Sami Baugh is an experienced talent acquisition, management and operations leader with success in the charter education management and higher education industries for over 13 years. Sami earned a double Bachelor's in Communications and Health & Sports Studies at the University of Iowa and a Masters in Sports Administration at Central Michigan University. As Chief Talent Officer, Sami plays an instrumental role as the driving force behind the talent strategy. Sami ensures the mission and vision of Distinctive Schools thrives through incredible, high-performing talent. She brings talent and recruitment expertise as well as a strong passion for and focus on diversity, equity and inclusion to Distinctive Schools.

DS Education Career Paths & Compensation

DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPALS Starting Salary: \$100,000	Bachelor's Degree Valid Professional Educator License or equivalent Valid Principal or equivalent endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6+ yrs of lead classroom teaching experience 3+ yrs of instructional leadership experience Effective rating on DS Teaching Framework for 2 consecutive years at DS or equivalent from outside organization Attend DS Summer PD Institute Proven success of leading team planning sessions using data Work extended academic calendar year of 12 months
DISTINCTIVE ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS Starting Salary: \$75,000	Bachelor's Degree Valid Professional Educator License or equivalent Valid Principal or equivalent endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6+ yrs of lead classroom teaching experience 2+ yrs of instructional leadership experience Effective rating on DS Teaching Framework for 2 consecutive years at DS or equivalent from outside organization Attend DS Summer PD Institute Proven success of leading team planning sessions using data Work extended academic calendar year of 12 months
DISTINCTIVE COACHES Starting Salary: \$66,000	Bachelor's Degree Valid Professional Educator License or equivalent Specific Endorsements: (Bilingual Spanish, Special Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5+ yrs of lead classroom teaching experience Effective rating on DS Teaching Framework for 2 consecutive years at DS in all domains Attend DS Summer PD Institute Proven success of leading team planning sessions using data Work on extended academic calendar year of 11 months
DISTINCTIVE MENTOR TEACHERS Starting Salary: \$60,500	Bachelor's Degree Valid Professional Educator License or equivalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2+ yrs of lead classroom teaching or instructional leadership experience with Distinctive Schools Effective rating on DS Teaching Framework for 2 consecutive years at DS in all domains Attend DS Summer PD Institute Proven success of leading team planning sessions using data Work on extended academic calendar year of 11 months
DISTINCTIVE TEACHERS Starting Salary: \$55,000	Bachelor's Degree Valid Professional Educator License (or working towards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience Tiers (0-5 yrs) (6-10 yrs) (11+ yrs)

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THE POWER OF PRESERVING DIGNITY IN THE WORKPLACE

by Dr. Chaney Curran, Assistant Director for Human Resources;
Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD; Fort Worth, TX

In my 19 years as an educator, a lot has changed. I never thought I would see the day when we would have to so heavily and creatively recruit and retain teachers. The profession has become increasingly complex. It is so much more than just teaching and supervision of students. While change is inevitable, some things remain the same. People inherently want to be treated with dignity. Dignity at work linked is linked with our workplace experiences: how we are perceived and valued as a person in the workplace. Preserving dignity in the workplace often begins and ends with the employees, specifically their feelings of efficacy, feelings of respect and purpose. Teachers that perceive the school climate to be collaborative, supportive and positive have a lower likelihood of quitting. The workplace plays a major role in an employee's life because of the amount of time spent at work and could also be seen as a facilitator or inhibitor for the development of the employee. Recruitment and retention of employees in education is becoming more difficult. This is in part due to some uncontrollable variables, but one variable we can control is creating a work environment where people feel valued and respected.

One dignity squelching experience at a grocery store still weighs on my mind. As the store clerk scanned my items one-by-one over the machine, a manager approached the employee and began to sourly explain that the employee was not taking her lunch at the correct time which was, in turn, causing a problem for the staggered lunch breaks of others. I could not help but wonder why this conversation was happening here and now, and why the manager was using such an unkind tone of voice. It was an uncomfortable confrontation for both me and the employee. Before departing with my shopping basket, I smiled and extended a generous note of gratitude to the deflated employee for her work and wished her a good day. I despised that the conversation was not conducted privately with the employee and that the tone of voice the manager used was demeaning. I wondered how long it would be before that employee resigned and shared her story of being devalued and disposable with others. I started to think about my own interactions with leaders when I served as a substitute teacher, classroom teacher, campus administrator and now a district administrator. I think back fondly of those leaders who treated me with compassion, kindness, value...dignity.



To be able to improve the practice of preserving dignity in the workplace, it is important to understand the foundational constructs of what dignity is. Dignity, as a concept, is commonly associated with worth, value and autonomy. Dignity can be described as relative and changeable which has an internal and external side, that could be experienced in relation to someone or something. The changeableness is the ability of one's dignity to be shredded or strengthened based on any given experience. Scholars have classified dignity into two parts, internal and external dignity. Philosophy and theology are major sources of internal dignity, of which we are the sole owner of. External dignity is primarily experienced in our interaction with the outer world and could be impacted by others' judgment, one's productivity and other types of contributions which a person makes to the outer world. It would be difficult to explore these two parts separately in our effort to obtain a well-rounded understanding of dignity. For this conversation, internal and external dignity will be intertwined and not reviewed separately.

As stated earlier, the act of recruiting great employees in education is difficult, but of equal importance and necessity is how we retain great employees. Preserving dignity of those we work with is of absolute importance to create a workplace where people thrive. You can narrow the scope of dignity to "workplace dignity" or WPD. WPD is defined as an individual's perception about respect and trust, equal treatment, valuation of one's worth, fair-treatment, autonomy and freedom of expression and decision making enjoyed by an employee at the workplace. What this looks and sounds like may be different depending on one's life experiences, beliefs and philosophies. The overarching "wonder" of this topic is what school leaders can do to create and maintain a culture of preserving dignity in the workplace. When we create a culture of preserved dignity, we can experience more satisfied employees and a higher retention rate.

You can diagnose dignity from the point of five levels of human quality treatment: maltreatment, indifference, justice, care and development. It should be mentioned that these levels may be created not only by the managers, but also by the other employees. From this point of view, in order to protect and fulfill the dignity in the workplace, it is necessary to realize the following: justice understood as respect for workers

and their rights; care for the interests of the employees related to support in solving their problems; and, at the highest level, emphasis on development as wellbeing of employees.

Maintain Adjustability

When leaders interact with employees, it cannot be a "one size fits all" concept. It is necessary to be able to read, understand and adjust to your audience. Understanding and respecting other's values, boundaries, interests and communication style is a vital step to being able to preserve dignity in the workplace.

Clear, Kind Communication

Brené Brown says in her book, *Dare to Lead*, "Clear is kind." Ambiguity can cause confusion, which often leads to an employee not feeling confident and unsure in their work. Clear and kind communication creates leader/employee connections built on trust. Clear and kind communication is especially important when leaders need to redirect or correct employee work or behavior. Dignity can be strengthened or diminished during times of these crucial conversations.

Acknowledge Contributions

Acknowledging the contributions of employees lets them know their work is valued and appreciated. Sincere verbal or written praise reminds employees that they are a necessary part of a team working toward a goal.

These three items may seem simplistic in nature, but leaders should take inventory of the frequency and duration of these practices. When leaders place a priority on building relationships with their employees, clearly and kindly communicating and acknowledging employee contributions, workplace dignity can be established and maintained. Dignity is the ultimate moral goal of social actions, also in organizations and managers should always consider it in the context of interpersonal relations.



Dr. Chaney L. Curran has been in education for 19 years. She is the Assistant Director of Human Resources for Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD in Fort Worth, Texas. Prior to that, Dr. Curran served as an elementary campus administrator for 13 years.

STRATEGIC STAFFING OPTIONS TO ADDRESS SHORTAGES

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

Across the nation, staffing shortages are wreaking havoc in school and has left a shallow pool of candidates who are qualified and ready to take on the demanding work in the field of education. Schools may have to make tough decisions to ensure quality staff are employed.

Across the nation, staffing shortages are wreaking havoc in schools. Factors contributing to the crisis are largely related to the pandemic, current economic conditions and the environment of public schools. The trend of individuals exiting the education profession and fewer graduates pursuing education careers has left a shallow pool of candidates who are qualified and ready to take on the demanding work in the field of education. Schools may have to make tough decisions to ensure quality staff are employed.

All students deserve and need committed, high-quality educators serving in their schools. Unfortunately, the current staffing crisis is tying the hands of school entities. High numbers of vacancies have shifted the workload to veteran staff who already feel overburdened and overworked. Add in the increasing demands of working in public education and it is a perfect storm of burned-out employees and few options to help ease their distress. To bring school entities back from the breaking point, school leaders can use strategic staffing models to alleviate the burdens on staff, ensure quality instruction is happening in all classrooms, as well as free up resources to provide rewards for staff through improved salaries and total rewards. While staffing conversations can be difficult, they could be the catalyst for organization improvement for the future.

Differentiated Staffing Options

Creating effective staffing models in schools is an arduous challenge. School leaders must think strategically to address concerns, maximize staff utilization and identify efficiencies in each department and on every campus. Every school entity has an obligation to balance fiscal responsibility while optimizing the school experience for students and entities must be committed to providing the best work environment for all staff.

How each school entity manages staffing is as unique as their students and their community, but there are options applicable to all entities when seeking staffing changes. By adopting new staffing models, temporarily or long-term, entities may be able to slow the staffing crisis and create a more effective model that benefits students and staff.

Eliminating Vacant Positions and Redirecting Duties

Sometimes school entities hold vacant positions for indeterminant periods of time with the hope that a qualified candidate will eventually fill the role. Holding onto vacancies can impact the budget and it can create a situation where a long-term substitute fills the position, but current employees take over the work.

Entities could consider eliminating long standing vacancies to recoup budgeted funds for the position and to allow school leaders to implement an alternative staffing option moving forward. Any elimination of positions should be strategic and this may need to be a temporary measure used only during a staffing shortage.

Typically, entities redirect duties and responsibilities associated with vacant positions to current employees. This can be problematic if the workload is burdensome. However, some entities may find that the department or campus can manage duties without the vacant position and it may be prudent to eliminate the position to provide cost savings and a more efficient staffing model.

School entities should evaluate current vacant positions to determine budget and organizational impact. The elimination of unused or unfilled positions could easily improve staffing conditions because elimination of these positions would be through attrition, a best practice for implementing staffing changes.

Alternative Instructional Models

Schools have options when utilizing staff to provide quality instruction to students. When there is a shortage of qualified teachers to fill class assignments, they may need to create new instructional models that maximize the use of additional staff to provide quality services to all students.

Sample Models Could Include:

- Designating a master teacher to deliver instruction to a larger group of students and assigning instructional aides to facilitate student management and instructional support
- Assigning instructional aides to teach specials classes at the elementary level (i.e., art, makerspaces, computer lab) instead of certified teachers
- Shifting pull-out and itinerant instruction to create a differentiated instructional model where the trained teacher provides instruction and services to students in the general education classroom
- Using a cluster of library aides to provide management of school libraries with oversight and instructional guidance provided by a certified librarian
- Assigning one teacher and one teacher aide to prekindergarten classrooms to ensure high-quality prekindergarten programs are provided

Reevaluation of instructional models requires planning and buy-in from multiple departments and individuals. While this staffing change can provide opportunities, it may be harder to implement in a short amount of time.

Class Size Limits

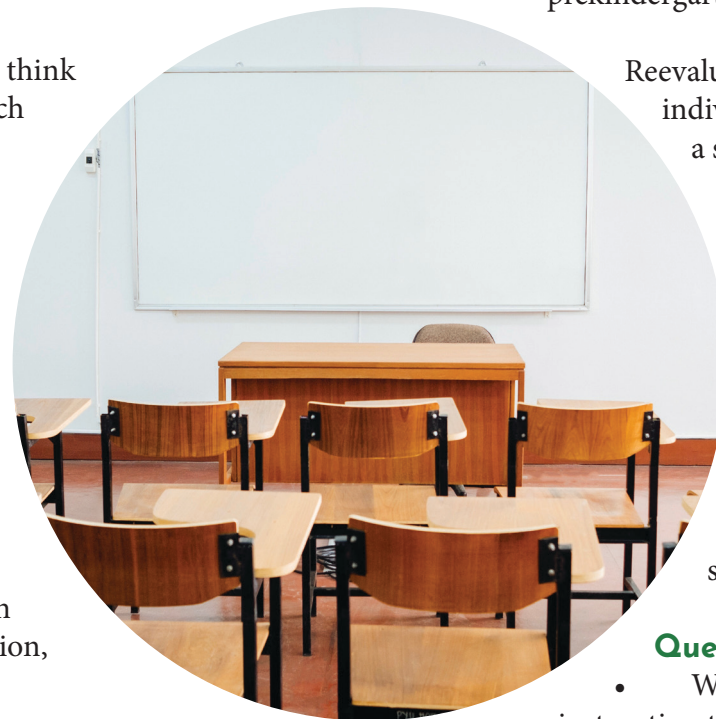
Staffing ratios directly impact the teacher's ability to effectively influence student learning. Guidelines are necessary to allocate students and teachers appropriately to classes at each grade level. Many states have rules that dictate maximum class sizes and those rules vary by state and grade level. School entities could evaluate options for exceptions or class size ratios in current staffing models.

School entities may set local class size limits for grade levels based on students' need and preferences from the community. In the time of staffing shortages, schools may need to strategically increase the student-to-staff ratio for certain classes.

Questions School Leaders Should Ask When Considering Increasing Class Sizes:

- Will increasing class sizes allow the presence of a skilled and highly committed teacher to provide instruction to students?
- Is this a temporary or permanent solution?
- If we increase class sizes, are we prepared to adhere to the requirements by the state for the affected grade levels (if applicable)?
- What student-to-staff ratio in each grade level is the school able to accommodate that will still ensure students receive quality instruction on a consistent basis?
- Who needs to be involved in the process of revising class size limits for the organization (e.g., stakeholders, board of trustees)?
- How do we implement and communicate the increase in student-to-staff ratios to our staff, parents and the community?

The decision to increase class size can be a difficult decision. However, this may be a viable option that could have minimal overall impact in schools. An advantage of strategically increasing class sizes is the reduced need for staff and the possible cost savings gained from employing fewer staff overall.



Master Scheduling

Campus master schedules and the allocation of instructional personnel reflect the values, priorities and strategic goals of the school. Unfortunately, there is limited evidence to show which type of master schedule has the greatest impact on student achievement. Therefore, schools must prioritize placing highly skilled and committed teachers in classrooms while providing adequate supports for the teacher to ensure students are receiving the best instruction possible.

Master schedules have an impact on many factors, including class size averages and the student load for teachers. When analyzing and revising schedules to address staffing, master schedule changes can have a significant impact on the number of staff needed and personnel costs. Schools could consider revising master schedules when cost-savings are needed or when there are not enough staff available to cover needed assignments.

Possible changes to the master schedule could include:

- Reducing the number of periods offered for students during the school day (e.g., eight-period day versus a seven-period day)
- Providing teachers one planning period and eliminating any additional periods designated for professional learning communities (PLCs), department meetings or additional assignment duties (e.g., travel period, department chair responsibilities)
- Assigning more academic classes to extracurricular sponsors and athletic coaches to ensure more academic offerings are available throughout the day
- Maximizing teacher certifications or licenses by assigning teachers more than one content area or grade level assignment

There are many scheduling options that entities could consider to increase staffing efficiencies. Entities should ensure any options considered meet the needs of the campus and decisions should have a heavy focus on the model that provides students the best instruction and services available.

Next Steps

When school entities evaluate and analyze staffing options, it is best practice to identify strategic opportunities first and then determine what is best for the organization. When there is a crisis such as the current staffing shortage, entities may need to pivot quickly to make real-time staffing decisions.

The options provided could be temporary measures to help stem the issues associated with ongoing vacancies and the shortages of qualified candidates and substitute workers, or they could be a step in the direction of changing staffing models for the future. Strategic staffing is key to organizational improvement and budget management.



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

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OPEN POSITIONS INCLUDE: PRESIDENT-ELECT, REGION 5 & 6 REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT-ELECT: SERVES AS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR ONE YEAR ASSISTING THE PRESIDENT & STANDING IN FOR THE PRESIDENT, IF NECESSARY. THE PRESIDENT-ELECT THEN SERVES AS PRESIDENT DURING THE FOLLOWING YEAR. IN THE THIRD YEAR, THEY ASSUME THE IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT POSITION.

REGION 5/REGION 6 REPRESENTATIVE: SERVES A THREE-YEAR TERM AS A VOTING MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ASSISTING IN THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING & EVALUATION OF THE POLICIES, GOALS & ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION WHILE REPRESENTING THE WISHES & NEEDS OF THOSE IN THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL REGION. THEY ALSO SERVE AS A LIAISON TO THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES.

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A TRIBUTE TO FUTURE TEACHERS: SIGNING DAY CEREMONY FOR CADDO PARISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by Dr. Karen Peace, Teacher Recruiter;
Caddo Parish Public Schools; Shreveport, LA

“Teaching is the one profession that creates all other professions.” - Anonymous

Like many other school systems, Caddo Parish Public Schools in Shreveport, Louisiana has worked diligently to recruit and retain a high-quality, diverse teaching staff. As part of the effort, the district has created dual enrollment teaching professions courses for high school students and supported the establishment of Educators Rising clubs. The district staff began discussing ways to incentivize participation in these initiatives. The team decided that working to elevate the profession in the community by hosting an official signing day for students participating in the courses and clubs would be a great way to promote participation in our honorable profession.

The goal of A Tribute to Future Teachers: Signing Day Ceremony for Caddo Parish Public Schools is to recognize and honor the decision of graduating high school seniors to become professional educators upon completion of college. The students recognized at the ceremony have completed the district’s teacher education courses, been accepted to college with the intent of achieving teacher certification and/or named a recipient of a Call Me Mister Scholarship.

A Tribute to Future Teachers: Signing Day Ceremony for Caddo Parish Public Schools is designed to elevate the teaching profession and increase interest in becoming a professional educator by celebrating the noble decision of graduating seniors to attend colleges and universities with the intent to pursue teacher certification. In an effort to increase the supply of teachers, the Caddo Parish Public School system commits to provide each signing day honoree with a one-step salary increase upon successful completion of a teacher education residency and upon being hired for a teaching position in Caddo Parish Public Schools.

One highlight of the ceremony is designed to increase the diversity of teachers by recognizing the recipients of the Call Me Mister Scholarship from Caddo Parish Public Schools. Less than 2% of teachers in the U.S. are Black Males. The Call Me Mister program strives to increase the pool of qualified teachers from diverse backgrounds. Student participants are largely selected from under-served, socio-economically disadvantaged and educationally at-risk communities.

All graduating high school seniors from Caddo Parish Public Schools who have completed the district’s teacher education courses, been accepted to college with the intent of achieving teacher certification and/or named a recipient of a Call Me Mister Scholarship are invited to be recognized at this ceremony. In addition, representatives from the colleges and universities that the students plan to attend, family members of students, community dignitaries and the local media are invited to participate in this distinctive presentation.

The event is held at a local facility that is centrally located in the district. The students and their guests are welcomed into a beautifully decorated environment. Representatives from the colleges and universities set up tables around the room and decorate them with their school colors!

During the ceremony, each student is called to come forward and receive their honor cords and certificate from the superintendent. The certificate indicates that Caddo Parish Public Schools will provide a one-step salary increase upon successful completion of the teacher certification residency and becoming employed as a teacher in Caddo Parish Public Schools. Next, all students go to the table of their respective colleges and universities to sign their official letters of intent and have photographs made. To close the ceremony, a reception is held for all students and their guests to enjoy!

By creating this significant opportunity to publicly express how proud the Caddo Parish Public School system is to have students moving toward being part of such a noble profession, the profession is elevated throughout the community and participation in these district initiatives has increased.



Dr. Karen Peace is the Teacher Recruiter for Caddo Parish Public Schools in Shreveport, Louisiana who was appointed to serve on a Recruitment, Retention & Recovery Task Force for the state of

Louisiana. She began her career with Caddo in 1990 teaching Kindergarten and 2nd grade. In 1998, she became Instructional Coordinator and then in 2003, Principal. In 2006, Dr. Peace moved to the Caddo Parish School Board office becoming Elementary English Language Arts Supervisor and then Elementary Area Director of School Performance. She has served as an adjunct professor for Centenary College and LSU-Shreveport.





COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL: A WRAPAROUND APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

by Dr. Sarah Burnett, Employee and Labor Relations Coordinator;
West Chicago Elementary School District 33; West Chicago, IL

The saying “It takes a village to raise a child” is an ancient African proverb that is a commonly used phrase to reflect the collective responsibility of a community to foster a child’s development. Presently, this saying is similar to the Community School Model that a handful of school districts across the country have adopted. West Chicago Elementary School District 33 is a Community School Model public school district that believes in wraparound support for families, students and staff. District 33’s journey began in 2016 and has evolved into a comprehensive system of support that yields benefits for the well-being of the community and aides in recruitment and retention efforts of the Human Resources Department.

What is the Community School Model?

The Community Schools Model recruits and collaborates with local partner businesses and organizations to provide a myriad of services and support for students, families and staff to meet their unique needs. In the Community School Model, there is an integrated approach to provide before and after school programs that extend beyond the existing extracurricular opportunities, additional learning opportunities for families and community members and mental and physical wellness support. The Community School Model takes into consideration a multitude of factors, including the needs of students and families, services already available for students at their school, the availability and capacity of local partners and the willingness of school personnel staff to embrace the Community School Model. Within the Community School Model there are four pillars upholding the model.

In 2016, West Chicago Elementary School District 33 formally implemented a Community School Model, intentionally building the four pillars from the ground up. The work was launched by a community collaboration called WeGo Together for Kids and a Full Service Community School Grant from the Federal Department of Education. Since then, a team of three administrators and twelve family liaisons have built systems and worked with community partners to bring in services for our West Chicago students and their families.

The First Pillar: Integrated Student Support

The first pillar is Integrated Student Support. West Chicago Elementary School District 33 is fortunate to have twelve dedicated family liaisons who are the first point of contact for families in need and are integral to the operations of the Community School Model. When a family or staff member has a need, the family liaison for that building provides access and connection to the appropriate resources. District 33 has connections with community mental health clinicians to provide wellness support for staff and families and in addition to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), District 33 utilizes a service called Care Solace to provide mental and emotional support services. District 33 also houses a fully functional Community Market out of Lemman Middle School, where services are available to all families living in West Chicago, particularly serving families with children ages 0-18. The Community Market offers fresh produce, meats, milk, eggs, canned goods and household supplies for families.



The Second Pillar: Expanded Learning Time

The second pillar is Expanded Learning Time. This includes opportunities to continue learning and social interactions beyond the school day. Community partners and local volunteers play an important role in ensuring the opportunities meet students' needs. In District 33, there are a plethora of after school clubs and activities. The two main programs that are facilitated by partners are CAPE, which stands for Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, and Puente del Pueblo. CAPE partners professional artists with district employees to facilitate arts-based educational lessons that take place after school in students' home schools. Puente del Pueblo is a partner in District 33 that provides after school tutoring services for students. In addition, summer programming is available each summer to provide continued educational opportunities beyond the school day.



The Third Pillar: Family and Community Engagement

The third pillar is Family and Community Engagement. Family and Community Engagement is focused on supporting the whole family through a variety of community supports. Community connections are critical to ensure that support services and referrals are available for families and community members. Services address issues resulting in hunger, illness and exhaustion, by bringing nutrition programs, health services and other supports into the school. In District 33 there are a variety of community supports

available to families, including financial education, mental and physical health support, as well as language acquisition education. ESL classes are available for District 33 adults to attend four nights per week in the community. Additional opportunities include financial fitness classes, family wellness nights and an annual backpack event where families can obtain necessary school supplies at no cost. Schools also host Parent Cafes, which are learning nights for parents in District 33 buildings, that cover a broad range of topics based on need. Most recently, District 33 has implemented Navigating the American Education System (NAES), which is an after school program dedicated to helping parents navigate the educational system.



The Fourth Pillar: Collaborative Leadership

The fourth pillar is Collaborative Leadership. This pillar is foundational to ensure that Community School leadership is represented and has a voice in decisions that impact the district. In a Community School Model, the collaboration of leaders ensures that decisions are made in the best interest of students and families. In District 33, the Community School Coordinator is integrated into the superintendent's cabinet and takes part in key decision making for the district. The District 33 staffing structure is also established to include one Department



Coordinator and two Community School Administrators. This administrative team oversees systems and the development of the Community School Model in District 33, as well as collaborates with local community partners and supervises the twelve family liaisons. During the 2022 holiday season 139 District

33 students received multiple presents, stocking stuffers, books and \$25 gift cards from Humanitarian Service Project and 527 students received books and toys from Toys for Tots, thanks to the collaborative efforts of District 33 leadership and support from the family liaisons.



Benefits for Staff, Recruitment and Retention

Not only does the Community School Model provide support for students and families, but it also provides support for Human Resources. As the teacher shortage continues to challenge school district HR professionals, it is imperative to increase recruitment and retention efforts. Teachers' workloads and the demands placed on teachers is a persistent challenge that often leads to burnout from the profession. One of the benefits of the Community School Model is that it provides additional resources for schools and reduces non-instructional demands on school staff. By providing services and supports that address various needs of students, community partnerships enable educators to concentrate on matters of curriculum and instruction. In a Community School Model, the ability to align partnerships to solve an educational challenge, without increasing the workload or stress of teachers is powerful and effective.

The Community School model also provides support for district staff. Collaborative practices and allowing educators to have a voice are foundational to the Community School Model. The Community School team listens to the needs of staff members and collaboratively problem solves to overcome the challenges that are expressed. In District 33, mental health and emotional wellbeing are areas that the district prioritizes and supports with the Community School Model. In addition to the Employee Assistance Program, staff have access to a wellness program called Care Solace, a

D33 Community School Data	
During the 21-22 School Year, PreK-8th Family Liaisons Made...	
8,788	Contacts made with parents/ families
7,464	Referrals to non-academic community-based resources
2,633	Consultation visits with other D33 staff.
180	Home Visits

free resource that connects them to a network of providers to match their needs. Additionally, all District 33 staff have access to family liaisons and can rely on their community connections to gain access to resources in times of need. In a Community School Model, with the help of 'a village', staff are able to focus on being their best self so that students get the best teachers.

In summation, the Community School Model is a comprehensive system of wrap-around support that benefits students, families and staff, as well as supports the Department of Human Resources in recruitment and retention efforts. In a Community School Model, the network of partners maintains services for students, families and staff, so that staff are able to focus on their craft as educators and know that all of their students' needs are met. The Community School Model also enables educators to have a valued voice regarding their needs and allows a collaborative problem solving process to occur. Educator burnout is reduced and the levels of educator stress are minimized. In West Chicago Elementary School District 33, the Community School Model provides stability, hope and opportunities for all because everyone matters.



Dr. Sarah Burnett is in her tenth year in the field of education and currently serves as the Employee and Labor Relations Coordinator in the Human Resources Department in West Chicago Elementary School District 33. Sarah earned a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Aurora University, a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and Administration with a Principal Endorsement from Aurora University and a Doctorate of Education with a Superintendent Endorsement, also from Aurora University. Sarah has experience as a first and third grade teacher, instructional literacy coach and Assistant Principal, and has also had the honor of being a Golden Apple Award nominee and D300 Educator Spotlight teacher. Sarah has served on a multitude of building and district level teams focused on areas such as school improvement, data, curriculum writing for monolingual and dual language units, high impact instruction, instructional coaching, social emotional learning, teacher evaluations and building climate and culture. Sarah is a published author for AASPA and ASCD, and has also presented for IASPA and IALAS. Most recently, Sarah was awarded the Digital Branding Award through IASPA for her work in West Chicago District 33. She enjoys networking with others in order to provide customer service of the highest caliber to those she serves.

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DON'T WORRY, JUST NETWORK

by Jeff Schlade, Director of Human Resources;
Lakewood City School District; Lakewood, OH



Now I don't know about you, but I'm one of those who, when at a conference and the presenter calls for participants to get up and walk to another spot in the room to discuss the given topic with a total stranger, all of a sudden has an important phone call to take. Odd as it may sound coming from someone working in the human capital field, not to mention in education and in general enjoys the company of people, I'm just one with a fear of looking or sounding unintelligent or even uninterested when meeting others. Do you find yourself to be one who'd rather hunker down in the comfort of your office chair than be out meeting others and building relationships? You're not alone. However, the benefits of leaving your shell every once in a while to make a new professional acquaintance and begin building relationships far outweigh the temporary discomfort you'll experience in doing so.

Professional networking is an essential part of any career, but it can be intimidating for many people. Some fear rejection, others fear being judged and still others fear appearing pushy or self-serving. However, despite these fears, networking is a valuable and necessary part of any professional's career.

One of the main reasons to overcome your fear of networking is that it can lead to new job opportunities. When you network, you build relationships with other professionals in your field and these relationships can be valuable resources when you're looking for a new job. Many job openings are never advertised publicly, but are instead filled through personal connections. By building a network of professionals in your field, you increase your chances of learning about these unadvertised job openings and potentially landing your dream job. As helpful as it can be in your own personal pursuits, the importance professional networking plays in your role as a human capital professional can be even greater. From leads on candidates to fill a tough vacancy to things as simple as reference checks. Picking up that phone and making that call to someone you've already met and gotten to know a little bit will be a lot easier when the time comes to make those important reference checks. And the effort you've already put into building trust within the relationship will go a long way in an honest and open assessment within the referral being given.

Networking can also be a valuable source of industry insights and knowledge. When you connect with other professionals in your field, you have the opportunity to learn from their experiences and expertise. This can help you stay current on educational trends and developments and can also provide valuable insights that can help you improve your skills and advance your career.

In addition to the practical benefits of networking, it can also be a great way to build relationships with like-minded professionals within the educational arena. These relationships can be personally rewarding and can also provide support and encouragement as you navigate your career.

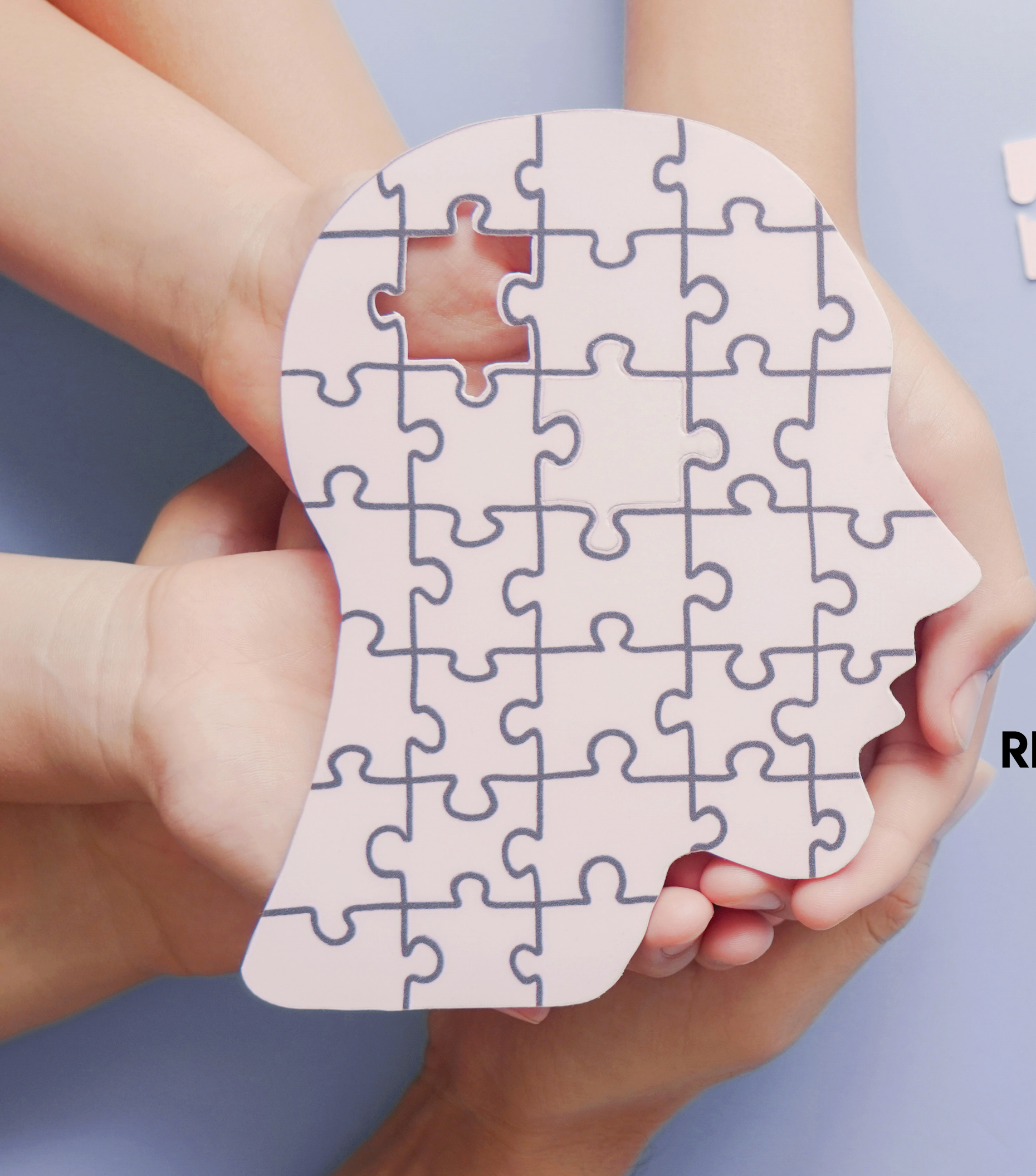
Despite the many benefits of networking, it can still be intimidating. Here are a few tips to help you overcome your fear of networking and start building valuable connections:

1. Start small: If you're feeling anxious about networking, try starting with small, low-stakes interactions. This could include striking up a conversation with someone at a conference or joining a professional group on social media.
2. Prepare in advance: Before attending a networking event or meeting with someone, take some time to think about what you want to achieve. Make a list of questions or topics you'd like to discuss and bring a copy of your resume or business card. From our friends at "Indeed", Jennifer Herrity suggests creating a personal elevator pitch – a basic 30-60 second verbal summary of who you are. "...the pitch can quickly help new contacts understand why they should connect with you..." says Herrity.
3. Be yourself: It's important to be authentic and genuine when networking. People are more likely to want to work with you if they feel like they know and understand you.
4. Follow up: After meeting with someone or attending a networking event, make sure to follow up with a thank-you note or an email. This is a good way to keep the conversation going and to demonstrate your interest in building a relationship.
5. Practice: Like any skill, networking gets easier with practice. The more you do it, the more comfortable you'll become.
6. Remember that everyone has something to offer: It's easy to feel like you have nothing to offer when you're first starting out in your career, but everyone has something to contribute. Don't be afraid to reach out and make connections – you never know what opportunities might come your way as a result.

Networking can be intimidating, but it's a valuable and necessary part of any professional's career. By building relationships with other professionals in your field, you can open up new job opportunities, provide and be provided with prized candidate leads, gain valuable industry insights and build rewarding relationships. Don't be afraid to reach out and make connections – the benefits are well worth it.

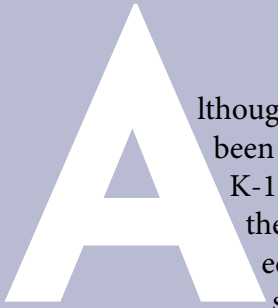


Jeff Schlade serves as the Director of Human Resources in the Lakewood City School District where he enjoys the goals of recruiting, training and retaining world class educators for the students of Lakewood; the first suburb West of Cleveland, Ohio on the shore of the Great Lake Erie. He has assisted with central office personnel and district-wide leadership teams in the development and design of its Visions of a Lakewood Graduate and a Lakewood Educator through their efforts with Battelle For Kids and the SOAR Network. Jeff has also served as a teacher, principal and superintendent over his career in education beginning in 1991.



INCREASING EDUCATOR RETENTION THROUGH SECONDARY TRAUMA AWARENESS

by Dr. Elise Gruber, Professor;
Stetson University; DeLand, FL



Although much contemporary research has been conducted on the impact of trauma on K-12 students, little has been completed on the impacts of secondary trauma on the educators who are at the forefront of this student abuse and violence.

Sometimes generically referred to as compassion fatigue, indirect trauma, trauma transfer or vicarious trauma, specifically understanding secondary trauma - which uses the theoretical framework of posttraumatic stress disorder- is crucial to addressing retention issues among educators. This is because today's exit surveys reveal educators' ongoing concerns for their own safety and wellbeing while working in schools. Exploring the impact of secondary trauma on educator retention and considering national, district and school based best practices for developing trauma aware cultures can assist human resource professionals in preparing for and mitigating secondary trauma for educators. Through awareness, prevention and intervention, this important mental health challenge may be resolved and educator retention may be increased.

A review of trauma is beneficial. Positive stresses such as frustration and anxiety with new experiences are brief and moderate and can be resolved through the availability of a caring and responsive person; nonnormative tolerable stresses, such as a family member's death, serious illness or natural disaster, can be mitigated more deliberately over time through the extent to which coping facilitation is provided. On the other hand, stress that is strong, frequent or prolonged without deliberate support can lead to toxic or traumatic stress. In this way, trauma can generally be best defined as an event or series of unconnected and multiple complex events, that is unpredictable, produces a feeling of helplessness and overwhelms a person's ability to cope.

Traumatic stress is perhaps our single most important and extensive health challenge today. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, one in four school children are exposed to a traumatic event, while the American Psychological Association finds that more than two thirds of children report experiencing a traumatic event by age 16. Traumatic stress is especially damaging to developing brains and has both cognitive and behavioral impacts: it has been tied to damaged neurons and limited connectors, which impacts cognitive growth; it has been tied to damage in the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for self-regulation and impulse control; and it has been tied to an over developed amygdale, which keeps the brain on high alert and can cause a freeze, flight or fight response.

Traumatic stress itself is often measured through an Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACE score which is calculated by determining how many of the ten types of ACEs a person reports experiencing. The ten types of ACE include emotional, physical and sexual abuse; emotional and physical neglect; and such household challenges as the abuse of a parent in the home, parental substance abuse, parental mental illness, parental separation or divorce and parental incarceration. It is important to note that an ACE score does not reflect the frequency or the severity of the adverse experiences but rather the number of ACE types reported. While the impacts of ACE on developing children have been well documented, the impacts on adults are still evolving, though high ACE scores have been tied to such risk taking among adults as smoking, illicit drug use, depression, heart disease, diabetes, multiple sexual partners and compromised immunity. This risk taking has been further linked to relationship troubles, poverty and homelessness, violence and incarceration, unemployment, lessened family stability and education limitations.

In the workplace the impacts of Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) on adults take a variety of forms, but a pattern is emerging. Related current research finds the following impacts of STS on adults:

- Re-experiencing: intrusive thoughts, nightmares, change of habits
- Avoidance: relationship issues
- Numbing: isolation, negativity, moodiness, depression, addiction
- Hyperarousal: hypervigilance, lack of concentration
- Altered Beliefs or Depersonalization: questioning commitment, change in identity, workforce turnover

Of particular interest in these STS impacts is this pattern of Altered Beliefs or Depersonalization: it indicates a tie between teacher retention and STS. As educators question their commitment, find less meaning in their work or alter their beliefs in their work, their desire to remain in the profession may be negatively impacted. For this reason alone, it is beneficial for those working in human resources to understand what STS is and how to mitigate it: doing so is one significant way to support and retain educators.

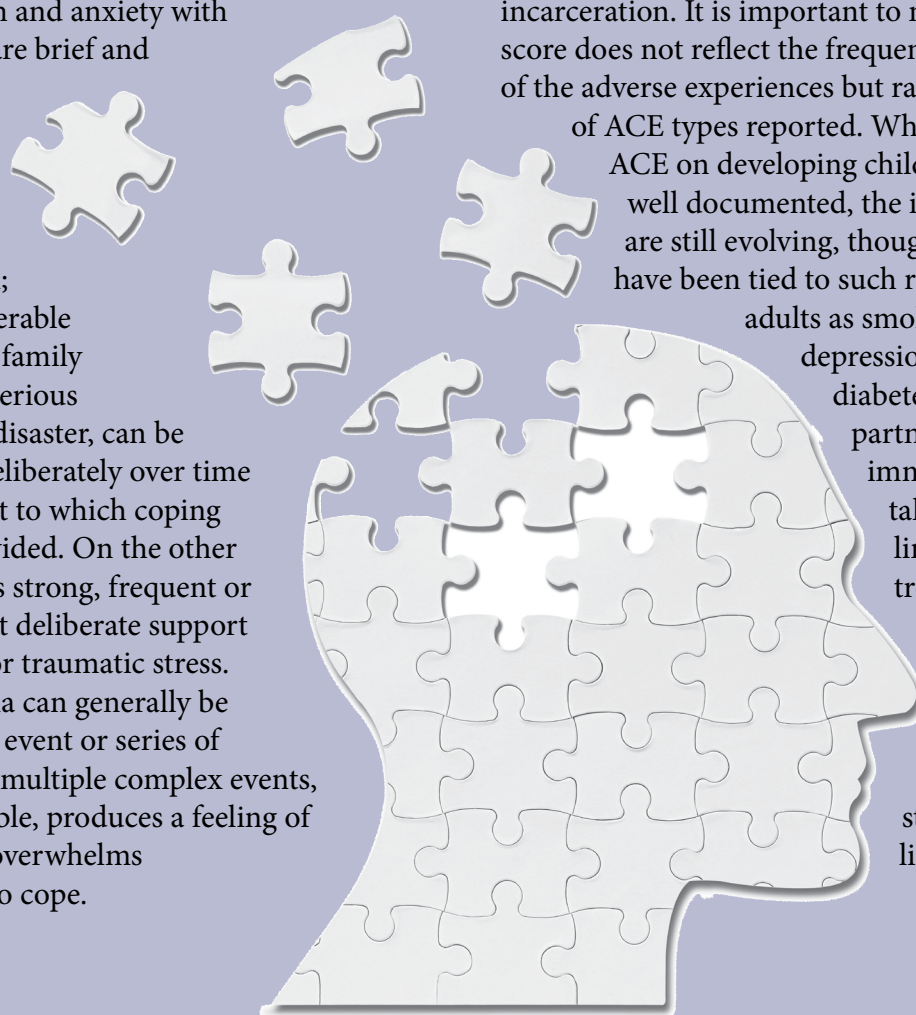
Although the medical, mental-health and law enforcement professions recognized the importance of providing member support based predominately on the compassion fatigue work as early as 1995, schools have been slow to recognize the need for such support for their own professionals. In fact, the first studies to recognize STS among educators began in 2012. That study found high levels of emotional connectedness with peers, with 36% of the educators in the study reporting symptoms of depression. Following that study, it was found that 75% of the educators surveyed had thoughts of changing careers. More recently, it was found that 70.3% of the teachers assessed were experiencing trauma like symptoms, with 43.2% showing moderate, high or severe symptoms of clinical intervention. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network further found that between 50-75% of teachers experience high levels of secondary trauma. Clearly the need for STS intervention and support exists.

Although states such as Wisconsin, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and some school districts have developed best practices for mitigating trauma among professionals and in communities, The Missouri Model of Trauma Informed Practices, while not specifically designed for schools, provides a potential pathway for school districts wishing to increase educator retention through STS awareness. This model, which has been used nationally as an assessment tool for best practices, presents four stages:

- Trauma Aware: staff are comfortable discussing trauma
- Trauma Sensitive: all staff are trained and organization ready
- Trauma Responsive: policies and environmental changes are made; skill training established
- Trauma Informed: community engagement occurs; ongoing measurement and sustainability takes place

This model recognizes that while awareness begins with open dialogue, sustained change requires continual evaluation and adjustment. Other models provide further school district resources and address the evolution of awareness into action. The national Trauma Informed Care Project emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety in its model including supporting staff development on the topic of training on traumatic stress and its impacts; creating a safe and supportive environment through building safety, information sharing, cultural competence, privacy and confidentiality and open and respectful communication; assessing and planning services; involving consumers; and adapting policies

Though these models are not based on schools or school districts, a further analysis of school district planning tools and resources indicate three specific strands for developing Trauma Aware school cultures. Though

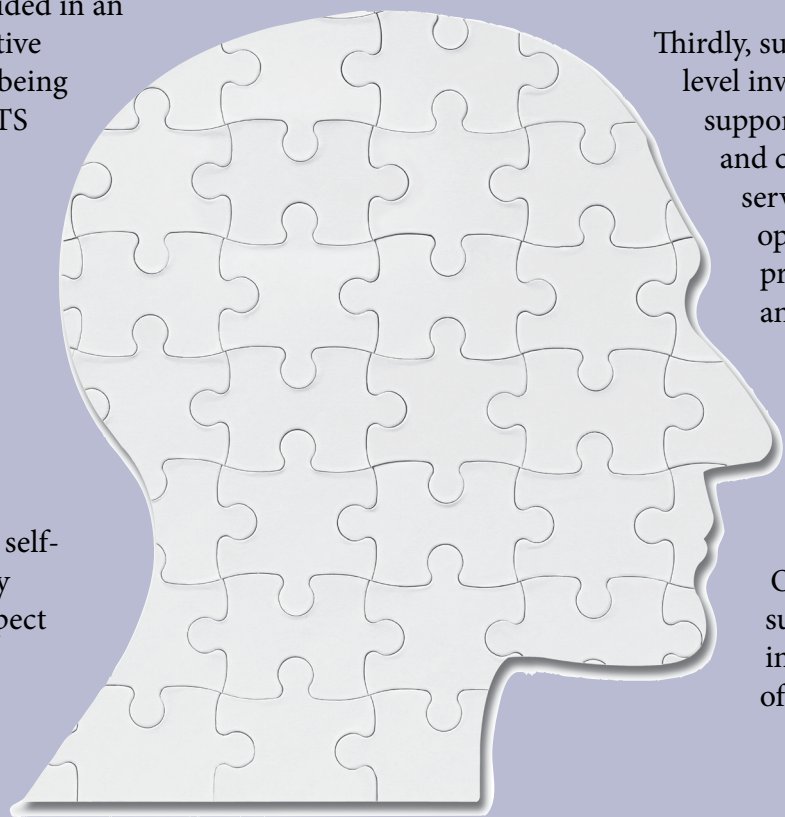


these strands have been loosely tied to research, the need exists for their further research and long-term sustainability. The three strands include providing the following:

- Preparation and awareness of secondary stress preparation and awareness of STS for educators through education preparation and onboarding;
- Training in self-care and resiliency; and
- Support at school and district level

The preparation and awareness of STS preparation through education preparation and onboarding is the most recent of the three strands and can be examined in four ways. The first is through awareness, or an increase of information regarding both K-12 student trauma and STS, including STS in educational curriculum. Importantly, this includes the recognition of STS as an occupational hazard. Teacher and school administrator training should include specific curriculum that addresses both student and STS and prepares educators for their own resiliency and mental health. Secondly, timely support from mentors should include meaningful and supportive supervisor feedback. This aspect, which has been tied to teacher retention, is pivotal to the safe and supportive environment and open communication necessary in establishing a trauma informed community. Thirdly, opportunities to reflect on the self and complex issues are critical to both preparation and self-care. Finally, school based and community mental health resources that are specific to unique educators' needs should be provided in an open and non-evaluative manner. Rather than being seen as a weakness, STS among educational professionals should be supported in the same way as it is among mental health, medical and law enforcement professions.

- Probably more research exists on self-care and resiliency than any other aspect of STS. Briefly, according to the



American Psychological Association, rather than being seen as a personality trait, resiliency should be perceived as existing on a spectrum as a process of adapting specific skills. Emotional, social and cognitive self-care can be improved by self-examining one's financial, social and spiritual life. Additional resources encourage self-assessment, fostering self-resilience, practicing self-awareness and self-management and tapping into supportive relationships. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network Self Care for Educators offers this specific guidance:

- "...Get support by working in teams, talking to others in your school and asking for support from administrators or colleagues.
- Recognize secondary trauma as an occupational hazard...the cost of caring
- Seek help with your own traumas....
- Talk to a professional...experiencing signs of secondary trauma for more than two to three weeks, seek counseling with a professional who is knowledgeable about trauma.

Attend to self care. Guard against your work becoming the only activity that defines who you are. Keep perspective by spending time with children and adolescents who are not experiencing traumatic stress. Take care of yourself by eating well and exercising, engaging in fun activities, taking a break during the workday, finding time to self-reflect, allowing yourself to cry and finding things to laugh about.

Thirdly, support at school and district level involves developing systemic support including school based and community mental health services as well as providing opportunities for education professionals to mentor and interact with other professionals. Though it should be noted that this interaction may also be a stress inducer, several studies have shown the benefit of support groups. Other district based strategies supported in these studies include the destigmatization of mental health treatment,

reduced class size and increased control of work environments. Of special interest is research by Essary, Barza and Thurston, pointing to the need for a review of leave policies that allow educators time to recover. Broadly speaking, district or system models can be designed using a tier mitigation: the first tier including interventions designed for those who have significant levels of STS and are most appropriately treated by individual therapy and additional outside supports; the second designed for teachers and staff who have been moderately impacted by STS, including individual supervision and mentoring; and the third applied universally to all teachers and staff regardless of STS level in which training prioritizes self-care and awareness.

In conclusion, to increase educator retention through secondary trauma awareness, growing research shows that school districts should provide preparation and awareness of secondary stress preparation and awareness of secondary stress for educators through education preparation and onboarding; training in self-care and resiliency; and systems that provide support at school and district level. This implementation may not only retain educators but improve overall student learning by improving the relationships inherently necessary for learning.



(Doreen) Elise Gruber, Ed.D. has been an educator for 40 years and is currently an assistant professor of educational leadership at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida and a certified Trauma and Resiliency Trainer. At Stetson she teaches HR and instruction and supervision to future school leaders and completes research and presentations on leadership, retention, succession planning, sustainability and trauma. Prior to teaching graduate school, Gruber served as a secondary English, humanities and gifted teacher, assistant principal and as the principal of three secondary schools in two districts, including opening a large, urban high school. Gruber was a coordinator of K-12 gifted programs for the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools in Germany. Additionally, she served as an Executive Area Director in one of the nation's largest districts, supervising 28 K-12 schools and working with national recruitment. She has taught preservice teachers at four separate universities and consults with schools and districts. Gruber's hobbies include yoga and water sports; she resides in Winter Springs; she can be contacted at dgruber@stetson.edu

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MENTAL HEALTH IS MENTAL WEALTH

by Dr. Rodney Lewis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources;
City of St. Charles School District; St. Charles, MO

Recent studies have found that nearly one in four adults experience mental health issues, most of whom are employed. This data means that many employers are likely dealing with employees who face mental illnesses daily. Furthermore, research suggests that nearly 70% of employees feel their employer isn't doing enough to support their mental health needs. With these statistics in mind, it's clear why employers should prioritize creating an environment where individuals can feel safe discussing their struggles openly and receive adequate support from management and HR professionals alike.

There's a growing acknowledgment that mental health, far from being an embarrassing challenge to ignore, is something to be welcomed and supported. It's about time organizations start recognizing that investing in their employees' mental health can lead to increased productivity and improved overall morale in the workplace. Many Human Resource departments are beginning to realize that "mental health is mental wealth." Through tactical strategies and understanding how HR professionals can empower workers psychologically with structure and meaningful work, we experience change at all levels within our organization—all while nurturing our most essential asset: people.

Why Should We Care About Mental Health?

Mental health is a state of emotional and psychological well-being. It involves feeling good about oneself, coping with life's challenges and stresses, having positive relationships with others and achieving one's goals in life. Mental health is key to leading a happy and successful life. However, when mental health issues go untreated or unrecognized, employees' performance

and productivity can suffer, creating a ripple effect that affects the entire organization. That's why organizations must invest in their workforce by supporting mental health initiatives like providing access to therapy or mental health professionals, promoting self-care practices and offering flexible work arrangements.

How Can We Improve Mental Health?

There are a variety of ways to improve mental health and well-being. Some simple steps include practicing mindfulness, engaging in physical activity, getting enough sleep, maintaining healthy eating habits and reaching out for support when needed. For organizations looking to further invest in their employees' mental health, more comprehensive strategies could involve:

- Implementing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides access to mental health services.
- Creating a supportive environment through open communication.
- Providing resources such as training or education on topics like stress management.

Additionally, organizations should consider the overall workplace culture and ensure their employees clearly

understand their roles and responsibilities, which can help reduce stress levels in the office.

What Are The Benefits?

The benefits of having a good mental health state are numerous. Mentally healthy individuals tend to be more productive, enjoy better relationships with friends and family, have higher self-esteem and cope better with stress. On an organizational level, investing in employees' mental health often leads to improved job performance, increased engagement and morale, more robust team dynamics and better decision making. Additionally, investments in mental health can help improve organizational culture by creating an environment where it's okay to talk about mental health concerns and seek support. Finally, investing in employees' mental health can positively impact the organization's bottom line by reducing absenteeism and improving job satisfaction.

Are You Struggling With Mental Health?

While we might be the HR leader seeking to support our employees, we must look at our mental health. It can

be challenging to recognize when we are struggling. Some common signs of mental health issues include changes in mood, energy levels, or appetite; feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness; difficulty concentrating; and increased anxiety or stress. If you're concerned about your mental health, you should seek help. Talk to a trusted friend, family member or healthcare professional about how you're feeling and explore available options, such as counseling, support groups or lifestyle changes. Creating a self-care plan that includes healthy eating habits, exercise, mindfulness and relaxation techniques are also essential. Taking steps toward improving your mental health can be daunting, but with the proper support, you can find ways to manage your mental health.

Will You Share Your Story?

Sharing your own experiences with mental health or stories of others who have struggled (or overcome), their struggles is a powerful way to reduce stigma and encourage people to get the support they need. By openly discussing mental health, we can create a more understanding and supportive environment for those struggling with mental illness. Listening to others' experiences can help us feel less alone and empower us to take the necessary steps to improve our mental

health. In addition, we can also learn from those who have overcome their struggles with mental illness by hearing what has helped them find a sense of relief or well-being. Finally, sharing stories of hope can be incredibly inspiring for those in need of support. Ultimately, all these stories and experiences can help those in need by destigmatizing mental health issues and encouraging people to seek the assistance they need.

Your Struggle Is My Struggle
We can create a



more understanding and supportive environment by talking openly about mental health and sharing stories of hope. Listening to others' experiences can help us feel less alone while hearing what has helped those who have overcome their struggles with mental illness can inspire those in need of support. Taking proactive steps towards improving our mental health is essential for overall well-being. We must all strive to reduce the stigma around mental illness by creating an open dialogue that encourages people to seek the necessary assistance they need without fear or judgment.

Doing this can help create an environment where mental health is taken seriously and those in need are supported. But ultimately, we all have a responsibility to look out for each other and ensure everyone has access to the necessary support to live happy and healthy lives. So, together, let's work towards destigmatizing mental health and creating a safe space for everyone to get the help they need.



Dr. Rodney Lewis has served the City of St. Charles School District for three years as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Before moving to HR, Dr. Lewis was a principal for six-years in the Rockwood School District and the Ferguson-Florissant School District. Currently, he is starting his first year as President of MOASPA-STL as well as the MOASPA Board of Directors, where he will continue the goal of growing, developing and supporting Human Resource personnel across the St. Louis region.

• 2023 BEST PRACTICES MAGAZINE •

AASPA IS NOW ACCEPTING ARTICLES FOR THE 2023 BEST PRACTICES MAGAZINE. THE ANNUAL PUBLICATION FEATURES ARTICLES FROM MEMBERS ON STRATEGIES OR PROGRAMS ON A PARTICULAR TOPIC. AASPA'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HAS CHOSEN, "EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT" AS THE THEME FOR THE 2023 ISSUE. POSSIBLE TOPIC IDEAS COULD INCLUDE ARTICLES ON:

- WORKLIFE BALANCE
- SURVEYS
- COMMUNICATIONS
- CAREER MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITIONS
- DATA-DRIVEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH AASPA MEMBERS ACROSS THE WORLD, PLEASE CONSIDER SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE. ARTICLES SHOULD BE EMAILED TO ANNA@AASPA.ORG BY FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2023.

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

POWER UP!

YOUR DIVERSITY

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION SUMMIT
BALTIMORE, MD
APRIL 20-21, 2023



The AASPA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summit is a two-day event developed for those individuals who are seeking to increase their knowledge in the areas of leadership, recruitment, selection and retention of diverse individuals in PK-12. Participants will be able to select from sessions specific to recruitment as well as strategic leadership in human resource practices for diversity, equity and inclusion.

ATTENDEES WILL LEARN:

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

Who Should Attend? HR Directors • Superintendents • Assistant Superintendents • Principals • District Recruiters • School Board Members



KEYNOTE SPEAKER - DR. ERIKA BROWN

Changing the Narrative: African American and Latinx Educator Retention

In this session we will examine how African American and Latinx educators have historically and contemporarily been woefully underrepresented in American public schools and how their presence and/or absence impacts the academic achievement of African American and Latinx students. Much research has indicated the benefits of African American and Latinx educators for both students of color and white students. By focusing on the oral tradition of storytelling, as a strategy for the retention and in a time of shortages, participants will be able to examine the stories of African American and Latinx educators teaching in primarily white institutions. This will provide courageous organizational leaders and thinkers with a strategy to inform, support, and understand, not only the experiences of, but the unique challenges they faced African American and Latinx educators.

For the purpose of this session the problem of a lack of teacher diversity will be examined in light of racial microaggressions as experienced by African American and Latinx teachers in K-12. Through thoughtful interactions and discussions this session seeks to establish a need for change; change in the way we examine the problem of a lack of teacher diversity, the narratives with which we hold to be true and representative, in order to dismantle the structures that disadvantage minority teachers, if we hope to serve as agents of change.

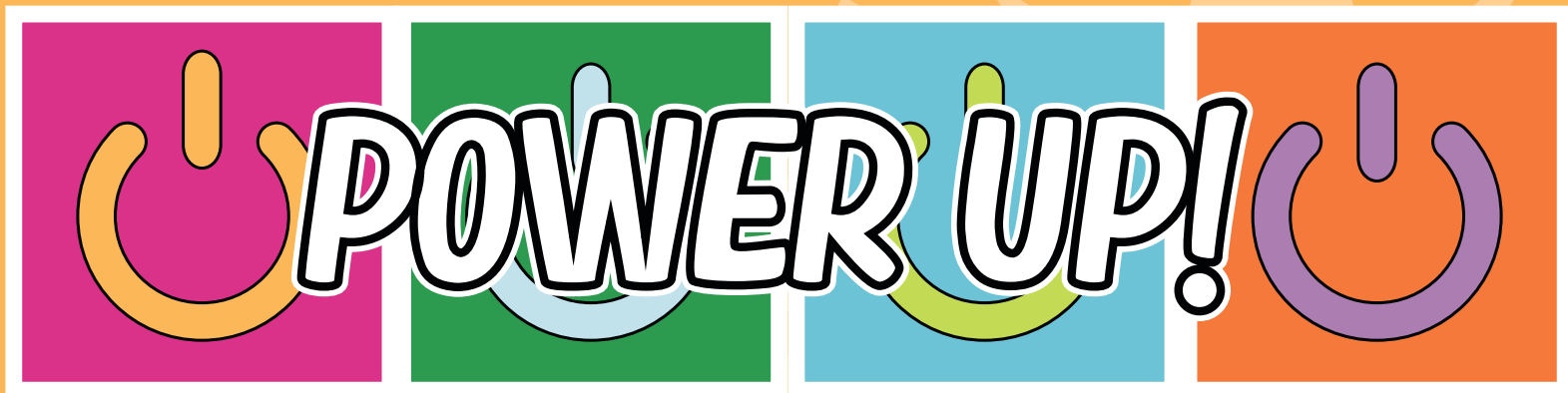
ATTENDEE REGISTRATION

	THRU 3/10/2023	AFTER 3/10/2023
AASPA MEMBER	<input type="checkbox"/> \$375	<input type="checkbox"/> \$475
NON-MEMBER	<input type="checkbox"/> \$650	<input type="checkbox"/> \$750

REGISTER AND LEARN MORE!



REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 1ST!



AASPA's 85th Annual Conference
October 3-6, 2023
Anaheim, CA

American Association of
School Personnel Administrators
7311 W. 130th Street, Suite 170
Overland Park, KS 66213

