

FEBRUARY - APRIL 2019

# PERSPECTIVE

NEWS FOR & ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATORS

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Creatively Recruiting  
Teachers

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Commitment to  
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2019 - 2020 Executive  
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AASPA Awards &  
Recognitions Information

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# President's Corner From the Desk of Jason Liewehr, AASPA President



As the NFL prepares for the Los Angeles Rams and New England Patriot Super Bowl, I'm reminded of the talent and teamwork it takes to make it to the big game. The game is the apex of professional football, and I am in awe as I watch the pageantry, pomp and circumstance this event produces. Some of the greatest NFL players to play football never make it to this game. The best teams battle through their season with grit and determination to earn a post season opportunity. Each time they square off, coaches send their best quarterbacks into the game where they audible their players into the right positions to become playmakers.

On any given school day, we allow our best players, our principals, to quarterback campuses. We know that with a strong team, they will succeed. They may have to call an audible at the line and get their offense in the right position. Then day by day, they work toward the end of the year. When successful, great leaders point accolades to their player talent. Therefore, our job of getting the best talent is a high priority to success.

This led me to ponder the NFL draft as the teams have been scouting college players, bring them in for a tryout or interview, sign them to contracts and begin coaching them for the games. I realized the school industry isn't much different.

Recruiting season is upon us. This is our draft. This is when we set out to visit new teachers at college and other job fairs and invite them to our district for interviews. We offer them positions, sign them to contracts and begin coaching them for the daily grind in the classroom. This recruiting elicits competition among districts. Salaries, benefits and most importantly, culture, all play a part in the teacher's decision to accept a new position.

During the NFL draft, fans typically wonder if their team will draft the position player they need or take another player which may provide a different value to the organization. As we reach recruiting season, our constituencies do the same. Do we draft what we need? Or do we allow our hiring managers to look for something different? Providing our children with the best teachers available is the most common challenge we hear about. As we stoke the challenges of recruiting and retaining top talent, we also turn our attention to hiring a staff that matches the diversity of our students. Current literature supports the idea that student achievement increases when students have teachers that match the diversity of the student population. To that end, your AASPA Board has recently agreed to support the Association of American Educators Foundation as one of the organizations that "believe this is a problem we can all work together to solve and that doing so rewards not only our students but current and future educators as well. We believe that increasing teacher diversity elevates the teaching profession and improves the lives and outcomes of all students."

Good luck to my colleagues in the 2019 teacher draft. As we head out on the road this season to scout our new talent, let us focus on what the organization and industry need to promote the best in education; to provide a product to our stakeholders which we can all be proud of. Because when we work as a team, and when we have the talent, we can make it to our super bowl.

Sincerely,

Jason Liewehr  
AASPA President

# How Rural Districts Are Creatively Recruiting Teachers

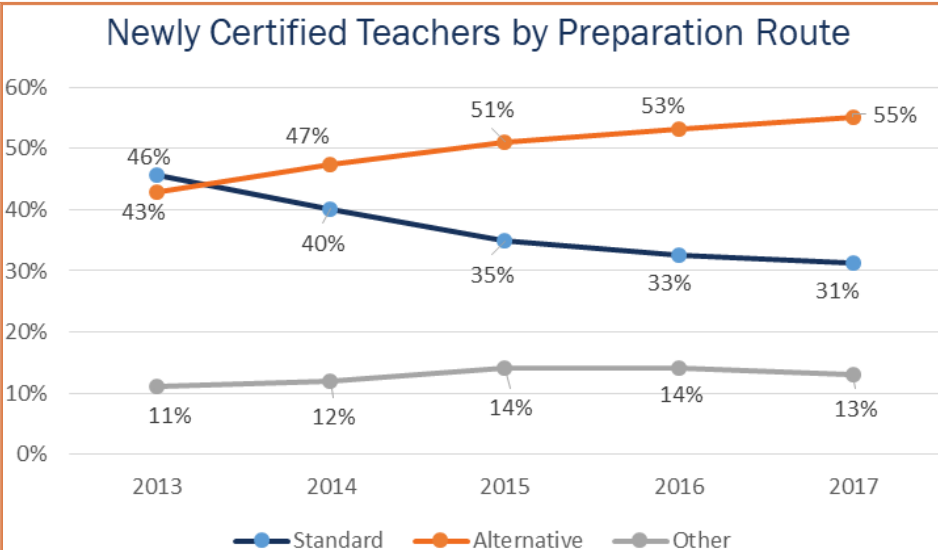
By Zach DiSchiano; Communications Specialist; TASB HR Services; Austin, TX

On any given weeknight in Crosbyton, TX, you'll find at least four adults in a computer lab at the town's only high school.

They're not there to fix software bugs. It's not an online gaming club. It's a group of people collectively working on their associate's degrees through online community college courses.

And two years from now, these four individuals will make up at least 50 percent of Crosbyton's next wave of new teacher hires.

It's made possible through a Texas Tech University



program, TechTeach Across Rural Texas, which aims to help districts in remote areas staff their classrooms and retain teachers.

"When I first got here, we had a lot of teacher turnover," Crosbyton CISD superintendent Shawn Mason said. "The majority of our teachers were coming through alternative certification. But over the last two years, we've started seeing that trend reverse itself."

There are many obstacles rural districts face in recruiting, and one of the biggest is figuring out a way to attract more traditionally certified teachers.

Attrition rates among alternatively certified teachers are roughly 10 percent higher than those from traditional educator preparation programs, and 60 percent of newly certified teachers come from alternative certification programs, according to the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Mason said that already-high number is significantly larger in rural districts, presenting another problem for small districts like Crosbyton to solve.

"Not only do we have to hire more alternative certification teachers, but

those teachers, usually because of lack of preparation or quality preparation programs, don't make it through the first five years," Mason said. "That really makes it tough on rural districts because now you have a revolving door. And once that revolving door starts—we've looked at this five years ago when I came aboard here at Crosbyton—the high turnover of teachers becomes one of the contributing factors to low academic performance."

These challenges aren't unique to Crosbyton. Rural districts in Texas consistently lose out on the top new teachers in the state to bigger, higher paying cities and suburbs that have more to offer in the way of business and entertainment. Mason said hiring season doesn't make its way to rural districts until late-June or early July, as the candidates who couldn't find jobs in large districts slowly start applying to suburban and, finally, rural districts.

This places a huge burden on remote schools because, not only are they getting a drastically late start staffing their schools, they're also getting less-qualified applicants to choose from. Coupled with the fact the number of college students pursuing teaching as a career in general continues to decline, rural districts are left in full panic-mode every summer.

## Fewer teachers, more competition

O'Donnell ISD superintendent, Cathy Palmer, has the disadvantage of competing with Lubbock ISD for teachers despite being located 45 minutes away. Teachers who live in the O'Donnell area have the option of hopping on I-87 up to Lubbock and working for a district that pays significantly more, and there's not much O'Donnell can do about it.

Even so, Palmer said her district didn't start to struggle filling vacancies until 2015.

"I really started noticing it three years ago," she said. "Before that, people were talking about teacher shortages, but we were still getting applicants when we had openings. But about three years ago, it seemed like we stopped getting the number of applicants that we wanted, and the applicants that we received were not completely qualified."

Palmer said there are a number of possible reasons, but ultimately it could come down to the lack of prestige

surrounding the profession.

"It's not respected like it used to be," she said. "It's not promoted as a positive life goal anymore. It's like, 'Oh, well, you can always get your teaching certification.' And I don't know why, other than maybe we're responsible for that because we should have pride in what we do. That has to shift."

## Changing perceptions

Palmer is holding herself and her district accountable for changing the narrative about the teaching field in an effort to recruit more efficiently. Using aid from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Grow Your Own: Teachers grant, O'Donnell has taken advantage of the opportunity to show its students how respectable and fulfilling teaching can be.

"With this new Grow Your Own program that Commissioner (Mike) Morath is promoting, we're springboarding that and we're starting classes in school, we're offering dual credit for these kids to go into that field," Palmer said. "And we're letting them go and work with other teachers, and they're seeing, 'Oh, this is really a cool field to go into.'"

Introducing students to the profession isn't all O'Donnell is doing to elevate the perception of teaching. They're also taking to social media to promote their Grow Your Own program on a larger scale.

"We're just promoting it ourselves, I mean, what we do makes a difference," she said. "And we're able to talk about that, do a media blitz on that. We do it on Facebook, and we talk about how we can make a difference in kids' lives. And it's not just about money. Everybody seems to be talking about just the money. Well, we kind of have shifted that and started talking about, 'Look, you can raise a family, you can become part of a school family, and you can't really do that in any other profession.'"

## TechTeach serves Crosbyton well

Back at the CISD computer lab, our four future teachers are working together to get through their coursework despite some of them studying at different colleges. Whether they're taking classes from South Plains Community College or Clovis Community College, what matters is that they can take 100 percent

of their courses online so they can continue working in Crosbyton—a few of them are actually on staff for the district as secretaries or other support positions.

When they complete their associate's degrees, they'll be eligible for TechTeach Across Rural Texas, which will allow them to intern with Crosbyton CISD and complete their bachelor's degrees simultaneously in one calendar year. By August of next year, they'll be fully certified teachers with bachelor's degrees, ready to begin a new career in teaching.

With such an accelerated path to certification—and it can be intensely accelerated if someone already has completed college credit hours or has an associate's degree—it's fair to question the quality of training these teachers receive.

Mason denied that notion quickly.

“They're great quality,” he said. “That training program that Tech puts out, it's second to none.”

The strength of the program is a Texas Tech-provided (but district-funded) site coordinator or instructional coach. When the teacher candidates begin their internship, they're in classrooms three days per week under supervision of a cooperating teacher and the site coordinator.

“That site coordinator is the one that makes this whole thing work,” Mason said. “They come in and do observations, they meet with these students. They encourage them, they hold their hand, they motivate them. It's really like having a second principal in the building with them.”

Each coordinator can supervise 15-20 candidates across multiple districts. Crosbyton only hires three to eight teachers per year and can't entirely cover the cost of employing a site coordinator, so it made sense to collaborate with the other four members of the West Texas Rural Coalition (Floydada, Roosevelt, Slaton and Tahoka) to share both the financial burden and benefit of having a site coordinator.

In addition to meeting, encouraging and motivating students, the site coordinator also films their classes and reviews that footage to provide feedback and help refine their teaching methods. In the spring semester,

students are teaching in the classroom four days per week.

“By the time these students get through their internship, they've had a full year of teaching experience under the supervision of an experienced teacher, a site coordinator and a principal,” Mason said. “So when they come out, they're very well-trained, ready to hit the ground running.”

Crosbyton gets a three-year post-graduation commitment out of the teachers going through this program, which will likely turn into many more because the majority of the participants were sourced locally and already have ties to the community. Ultimately, that's the key to recruiting and retention in rural districts—establishing a bond among the teachers, students, parents, administration and the community itself.

### Going virtual

If you've ever been to Midland, TX during an oil boom, you know a half-empty parking lot at a restaurant doesn't necessarily mean there's no wait to get a table.

In a town where the unemployment rate is hovering around two percent, it's tough to staff low-skill positions, so even if the restaurant is half full, it may be a while before you get served because of the labor shortage.

This has a direct impact on the local schools, too. There are “now hiring” signs all over the city as workers continue to flock from their old jobs to the oil industry for substantially higher paychecks.

Last year, Midland had a teacher move away for reasons unrelated to oil. The solution they found may help the district fill vacancies regardless of what caused them.

“We had an economics teacher that was fabulous, was dual-credit AP, so there were higher credentials and requirements for those kinds of classes,” Midland ISD chief human resources officer, Woodrow Bailey, said. “She was moving to another state. We knew that we were going to have trouble finding someone to fill that vacancy once she moved, and she had great attachment to the kids and was just a great teacher.”

Bailey and his staff met with the campus principal to explore ways to keep the teacher on staff. They decided to try out a new method—virtual teaching.

“We thought we could utilize her through virtual teaching, utilize technology to see what we can do,” Bailey said. “We pursued that, and she was willing to do that because she wanted to finish the year with those students. And it was a great success. We found a way to keep her on staff and she taught a couple days a week with the students through virtual teaching, and responding and interacting with actual students, just virtually, answering questions and all of that. It was a great solution.”

The students enjoyed the experience but more importantly, outperformed academic expectations.

“Over the course of last year, not only did those students really thrive in the program and in the way that it was set up, but their scores were actually higher than in previous years,” Bailey said. “And I think that has a lot to do with the students being engaged with technology. It's interactive; it's where they are.”

Bailey also mentioned the high percentage of college students who end up taking multiple online classes throughout their higher education, so it may be helpful for high school students to get familiar with taking classes through different media now.

“This is a way that you can also address when a teacher is out on leave. Maybe a teacher goes out and has a surgery or has a child, and they're out for 12 weeks. Well, this is another opportunity to make sure that instruction continues with a certified teacher. This younger generation, they want something that's flexible. They want to work for places that provide

them with the ability to work from home.”

Midland ISD contracted for six sessions, or class periods, of virtual teaching for next year. Even though Bailey's sample size is small, he's confident turning to virtual teachers will result in the same amount of success as it did with his district's first experience.

Bailey said. “It's about that certified teacher in the classroom. It's not a recorded lecture. It's a teacher in front of those students and we have a facilitator. It's a lot different than things that have been out there for years where you can go online and take an online course, this is really geared toward direct, interactive instruction.”

Just down the street from Midland, Ector County ISD is starting a plan to use half-time teachers, which allows retired teachers to get back in the classroom without losing their Teacher Retirement System (TRS) benefits. The district plans to pay teachers whatever they made when they retired.

This works because the district can effectively take two retired half-time teachers and schedule one to work in the morning and the other in the afternoon, collectively meeting the responsibilities of one full-time teacher without doubling the pay. It also doesn't hurt to have two teachers with tons of combined experience back in the classroom.

Whether it's the location, low pay, economy or weakening interest in the profession, teachers are becoming more and more difficult to come by in rural school districts. But, through collaborative efforts, government grants, university partnership programs, emerging technologies and flexible work plans, there are now more innovative tools to cope with the effects of a teacher shortage than ever before.



Zach DiSchiano is a communications specialist at TASB HR Services. He's responsible for managing web content and social media accounts, as well as the division blog, the HR Exchange. Prior to joining TASB, Zach worked as a journalist, page designer and copy editor. Zach graduated from Texas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in electronic media and is currently attending graduate school at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas.

# Transforming the Teacher Pipeline Through Teacher Preparation Programs and School District Partnerships

By Andrea Anthony, Ed.D., J.D., pHCLE; Assistant Superintendent of HR and Student Services; Rutherford County Schools; Murfreesboro, TN

Career and job readiness of millennial students going into the teaching profession based on the current job market is an area of concern. Looking at our hiring overview for the 2017-18 school year, 25 percent of our openings were at the PK-5th grade levels; 17 percent at the 6th-8th grades levels and the remaining in subject specific areas including high school grade levels. With this trend extending into the 2018-19 school year and looking at our local Educator Preparatory Provider (EPP), MTSU, if we could get 100 percent of their students hired then this would only cover 60 percent of our needs based on the total number of teacher graduates this year at MTSU. According to the 2016-17 Tennessee Teacher Prep Report Card annual statistics, which began in 2015, 76.3 percent of the MTSU teacher completers were placed in Tennessee public schools within one year of receiving their initial license. Ninety-four percent of the teacher completers were placed and remained in Tennessee public schools the following year. Of course, MTSU has seen a decline in the last three years on the number of completers with 397 in 2015, 311 in 2016 and 315 completers in 2017. In 2017-18, our district hired 500+ teachers and could do so except for a growth position for a construction high school teaching position. With only 315 being completers at our local EPP, the challenge was finding teachers for the remaining 200 positions.

Hard to staff areas have been filled using district hiring bonuses and early hiring practices at recruitment fairs. To reach a wider array of candidates with greater diversity, we launched in the spring of 2018 additional online recruitment tools to advertise our openings. With an awarded EPIC state grant, our district will begin teaching EPP course work and become our own EPP to help our Career and Technical teachers gain their occupational license. Over an 18-month period, teachers will receive their occupational license. This will lower the cost of teacher preparation for our occupational teachers and help maintain diversity in this area. The enrollment by ethnicity at our local EPP provider does not mirror our district's student ethnicity pattern. MTSU has had 86 percent white, 7.6 percent black, 3 percent Hispanic, 1.2 percent Asian and the remaining as other. Our district is 62 percent white, 20 percent black, 13 percent Hispanic and 5 percent Asian.

Ninety-five percent of the teacher completers earned an evaluation observation score of at least a 3 ("At Expectations") on their first year as a teacher in Tennessee using the state TEAM evaluation rubric. Sixty-four percent of the teacher completers earned an Observation score of 4 or 5 ("Above Expectations" or "Significantly Above Expectations"). Fifty-six percent of the teacher completers earned a Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) score of at least a 3 ("At Expectations"). Twenty-six percent of the teacher completers earned a TVAAS score of 4 or 5 ("Above Expectations" or "Significantly Above Expectations"). We can see that the MTSU teacher completers that we are able to hire and retain are performing at high levels of success and with notable student achievement. Our district touts with our state report card findings that we have 99.9 percent of our teachers scoring at a level 3 or higher on the TEAM education evaluation. We are also proud of our 96.2 percent teacher retainment rate.

We must transform the teacher pipeline with our millennial generation through teacher preparation programs (MTSU) and school district partnerships. In the fall of 2017, MTSU and our district became part of the state department's cohort of the Network for Educator Preparation Partnerships (NEPP) for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. The Tennessee Educator Preparation Policy requires that all EPPs (MTSU) establish a primary partnership with its

primary school district (Rutherford County Schools). Both MTSU and our school district recognized that effective collaboration and improved communication will serve as an opportunity for improvement on both sides. The NEPP is designed to "foster effective, mutually beneficial partnerships between and among EPP providers and school districts in support of improve teacher effectiveness." We have been able to use a framework with resources, protocols and assistance to develop and sustain a partnership. The overall goal is for novice teachers from our millennial generation to enter the classrooms prepared and able to meet the diverse needs of all students.

We began with face to face meetings where we conducted a SWOT analysis to determine specific partnership needs. We also assessed partnership perceptions and developed aspirational goals for the next year through the co-development of strategies/action plans. We then moved to reviewing progress against desired outcomes and making necessary refinements to our plan. We shared barriers and strategies for success. Our final first year meeting was where we conducted partnership specific needs assessments and feedback. We have shared our talent pipeline with MTSU and both partners have made a commitment to share data together to drive our actions. We have worked over the summer to ensure coursework matches clinical experience and have spent more time in schools together starting with the 2018-19 school year. In our stage of continuous improvement, we are ensuring that district needs drive shifts in the teacher prep program pipelines, structures and systems. Our district is working in concert with MTSU to recruit candidates for the MTSU preparation program through our "grow your own" Teaching as a Profession High School Program.

In our NEPP action plan, we have specific intended outcomes: improvement on clinical placements; and collaboration on the selection and training of highly-effective mentors and supervisors. During the summer of 2018, we worked on including selection criteria for all residency candidate, supervisor, and mentor teaching handbooks. We are working on developing training modules for mentor teachers on co-teaching and edTPA requirements by the state. Beginning January 1, 2019, all pre-service teacher candidates are required to complete the edTPA. This is a performance assessment that measures preparedness in the areas

of student assessment, planning and instruction. We are posting training modules and videos on the MTSU COE website. MTSU is also conducting high school campus visits to meet with service clubs and the Future Teachers of America Clubs. MTSU faculty and our district have collaborated on creating a dual enrollment opportunity which began this fall of 2018 for our five largest high schools. This dual enrollment opportunity has been for our Career and Technical Education students in the Teaching as a Profession Area. We have been able to offer two dual

enrollment classes for two hours of university credit on each course. Our students this spring will be able to graduate in this area with four hours of university credit. We want our MTSU and district mentor teachers to see themselves as part of the employment teacher pipeline. We have begun a discussion about a possible dual-funded position to be placed at the school district office to coordinate training, selection, and placements of mentor teachers. Our partnership is working to retain millennial teachers who may be at-risk in their first three years of service of leaving.



*Dr. Andrea Anthony began her secondary education career 26 years ago and is continuously recognition for her leadership and vision in helping her high school move from a state target school to a 2011 National Blue Ribbon School. She began her leadership role as a high school mathematics department chair and a graduate school adjunct professor at MTSU. She has also served as a curriculum and instruction assistant principal, director of her district's K-12 summer schools, an executive principal for 12 years and her district's coordinator of secondary education. She has been recognized as Tennessee's NASSP Principal of the Year and Tennessee's Mid-Cumberland Supervisor of the Year. Currently, she serves as the assistant superintendent of HR and student services for Rutherford County Schools. She works in the fourth largest school district in TN with 46,000 students and 5,300 employees. Anthony went back to get her second doctorate in law, a doctorate of jurisprudence, citing so much of administration deals with the law and employing a world class staff. She added her SHRM HR generalist certification and pHCLE certification. Anthony is involved with her local university's EPP team, recruitment and job fair team and the state's retention team to recruit and retain effective CTE teachers.*

# Commitment to Culture Supports Transformational Leadership

By Brad Black; CEO & President; HUMANeX Ventures; Lincoln, NE  
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 Dr. Michael Lubefeld; Superintendent; North Shore School District 112; Highland Park, IL  
 Dr. Anthony McConnell; Superintendent; Deerfield Public Schools District 109; Deerfield, IL  
 Dr. Monica Schroeder; North Shore School District 112; Highland Park, IL

In every industry, profession and community, transformational leadership is recognized as the 'gold standard' for impact, quality, and sustained excellence.

In the following article, a gold standard in education is highlighted with the foundation principles and practices, resulting in exceptional performance over a five year transformation. From record staff and student engagement and growth, to independent recognition with record Blue Ribbon school designations at every building over the last five years, the proof of a vision and commitment to transformational practices and related impact is evident. (Deerfield 109). This same model is now being laid as the foundation for North Shore 112.

Our collective journeys in educational leadership overlap, intersect and complement one another. With many decades in public school educational leadership combined, we represent experienced K-12 educational leaders in the Greater Chicagoland metropolitan area. Since 2007, in one way or another, we have been engaged in structured selection of staff, seeking "one more like our best" applying tools of science into our world as education leaders. Our calling is supporting excellence at every level of education in support of student success, staff growth and positive community impact.

Imagine if your school is known around your community and profession for being a model of

'selecting one more like your best!' This is reflected in highly motivated, passionate, positive, high achieving, other oriented, solution oriented and mastery-driven professionals. The result is seen in how they behave, perform, and impact others in significant and positive ways, combining a wide diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

Organizational culture is deeply impacted by the rigor of 'selecting one more like our best,' as each individual that is carefully selected impacts student relationships, team relationships and strength, quality, overall capability and ultimately student performance and growth. From building leadership, to teachers and support staff, the collective impact of top talent can be seen, felt and measured.

Organizational culture is deeply impacted by the rigor of 'selecting one more like our best', as each individual that is carefully selected impacts student relationships, team relationships and strength, quality, overall capability, and ultimately student performance and growth.

Against outside benchmarks in 'Blue Chip' organizations, the following question is one important benchmark in measuring our success and progress against what the best do.

### 'Our organization selects highly talented individuals when hiring.'

- For context, Blue Chip organizations (McKinsey landmark study of more than 10,000 leaders)—19 percent of senior leaders strongly agree that their organizations do this.
- In our organizations:
  - o When surveying all Deerfield 109 employees (not just senior leaders) we have increased the percent of strongly agreeing by over 25 percent when we first

## • 2019 BEST PRACTICES MAGAZINE •

AASPA IS NOW ACCEPTING ARTICLES FOR THE 2019 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, "ONBOARDING" AS THE THEME FOR THE 2019 ISSUE. POSSIBLE TOPIC IDEAS COULD INCLUDE ARTICLES ON:

- NEW PRINCIPAL PROGRAMS
- SELECTING & DEVELOPING MENTORS
- NEW TEACHER INDUCTION
- HOW TO EXPOSE NEW STAFF TO YOUR DISTRICT CULTURE
- HOW TO ONBOARD SUPPORT PERSONNEL
- INTRODUCING SUPPORT STAFF TO THE EVALUATION PROCESS DURING THE ONBOARD

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH AASPA MEMBERS ACROSS THE WORLD, PLEASE CONSIDER SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE. ARTICLES SHOULD BE EMAILED TO MOLLY@AASPA.ORG BY FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2019.

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

set this standard to now 62 percent strongly agreeing. That insight from all staff measured in our annual survey is more than three times the senior leaders

of blue chip organizations. Further, 89 percent agree or strongly agree! At the same time we have measured our level of engagement among staff and reached world class results at more than 95 percent of all staff being highly engaged and satisfied (vs. less

than a third in a typical organization).

o Beginning our journey at North Shore at more than 30 percent strongly agreeing (all employees vs. only senior leaders) our efforts with communicating our vision of talent selected and

positioned, while being equipped with the tools and processes to realize this goal. We are already within reach of two times the 'Blue Chip' standard when asking ALL employees in our first year.

Beyond acquiring top talent that drives engagement and performance, we also focus our efforts on talent already in our organization, with a continuous effort to drive progress on the following questions (measured at least once per year), with feedback and action planning. Examples include:

**'In my role I have the opportunity to do things that I both do well and enjoy.'**

A fundamental belief and practice to drive individual, team and organizational engagement, is to make sure that all staff are positioned in a role that maximizes their greatest talents and skills.

**'I am provided opportunities to further my growth and development.'**

In a profession where professional development is well established, we want to continually measure the impact of our efforts and best understand where and how we have been effective in the growth and development

our staff—not measured in time and dollars but in quality and impact.

As we follow a model built on solid research and proven impact, we aspire to build a platform for modeling and sharing with our profession, so our mission of seeing students achieve their potential can be realized in every classroom, every school, and every community.

Mastering a transformational model contributes to the success of our students, their families, our communities, and our future. When we're routinely asked why we are so inspired by the work we do, we are reminded every day of the impact of embracing excellence and seeing the qualitative and quantitative results that matter—changed lives!

**'Our organization selects highly talented individuals when hiring'.**



For context, Blue Chip organizations report **19%** of senior leaders strongly agree that their organizations do this.



**89%** of Deerfield 109 employees agree or strongly agree that they select highly talented individuals when hiring.



**95%** of Deerfield 109 staff feel highly engaged or satisfied.

**Staff Selection**

*Select one more like your best*

Interviews: Teacher, Principal, Frontline Professional, Paraeducator, Teacher Leader, Teacher-Special Education, Education Specialist, Athletic Coach

**Staff Development**

*Leverage each person's talents*

Investing in the knowledge, talent, and self-awareness of your team multiplies their impact on students, the district, and the community.

**Culture & Climate**

*Create an engaging environment*

Imagine a school district with a vibrant, engaging workplace culture where educators and staff are motivated to give their all every day, creating a rich learning environment in which students can maximize their potential.

**Student Engagement**

*Maximize students' potential*

By utilizing the Student Engagement Survey, Family Survey, IMPACTeX Navigator, and Impact & Discovery Summit, districts can have better insight on students and how to better build and sustain an environment for them.

**STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT  
— DRIVEN BY —  
TALENT &  
CULTURE**



*Brad Black, President, Chief Executive Officer and founder of HUMANeX Ventures®, a consulting, training, coaching, research, and assessment firm, has devoted more than 25 years to changing the face of organizations worldwide by redefining the value and capabilities of their human capital and culture. By creating both "organizations and communities of excellence," Black's model for HUMANeX Ventures® instills a powerful competitive advantage, with an organizational culture that maximizes the growth potential of every employee and team member, as well as provides them the concepts and tools needed to become strong leaders.*



*Dr. Dale Fisher holds licensure from multiple states in the areas of teaching, curriculum development and educational leadership; specifically the principalship and the superintendent. He is currently the assistant superintendent for HR for Deerfield Public Schools 109, comprised of 3,000 students and 500 employees. After 10 years as a middle school principal, he transitioned to his role in HR in 2012. Dale volunteers his time serving both as the Region 2 Representative for the AASPA and Treasurer for the Illinois Chapter of AASPA. He is also co-moderator of the monthly #IASPachat which serves to connect and support K-12 HR professionals*



*Michael Lubelfeld, Ed.D., has served as a public school superintendent in suburban Chicago, IL since 2010. On July 1, 2018, he became the superintendent of schools in Highland Park-Highwood, IL (@NSSD112). His 25+ year educational career has included serving as an assistant superintendent, principal and middle school teacher. In 2017, he was named the Lake County (IL) Superintendent of the Year. He is the co-moderator of the Twitter chat #suptchat with Nick Polyak, and he and Polyak co-authored the book "The Unlearning Leader: Leading for Tomorrow's Schools Today" (Rowman-Littlefield Publishers). His latest book "Student Voice: From Invisible to Invaluable" was released in January 2018.*

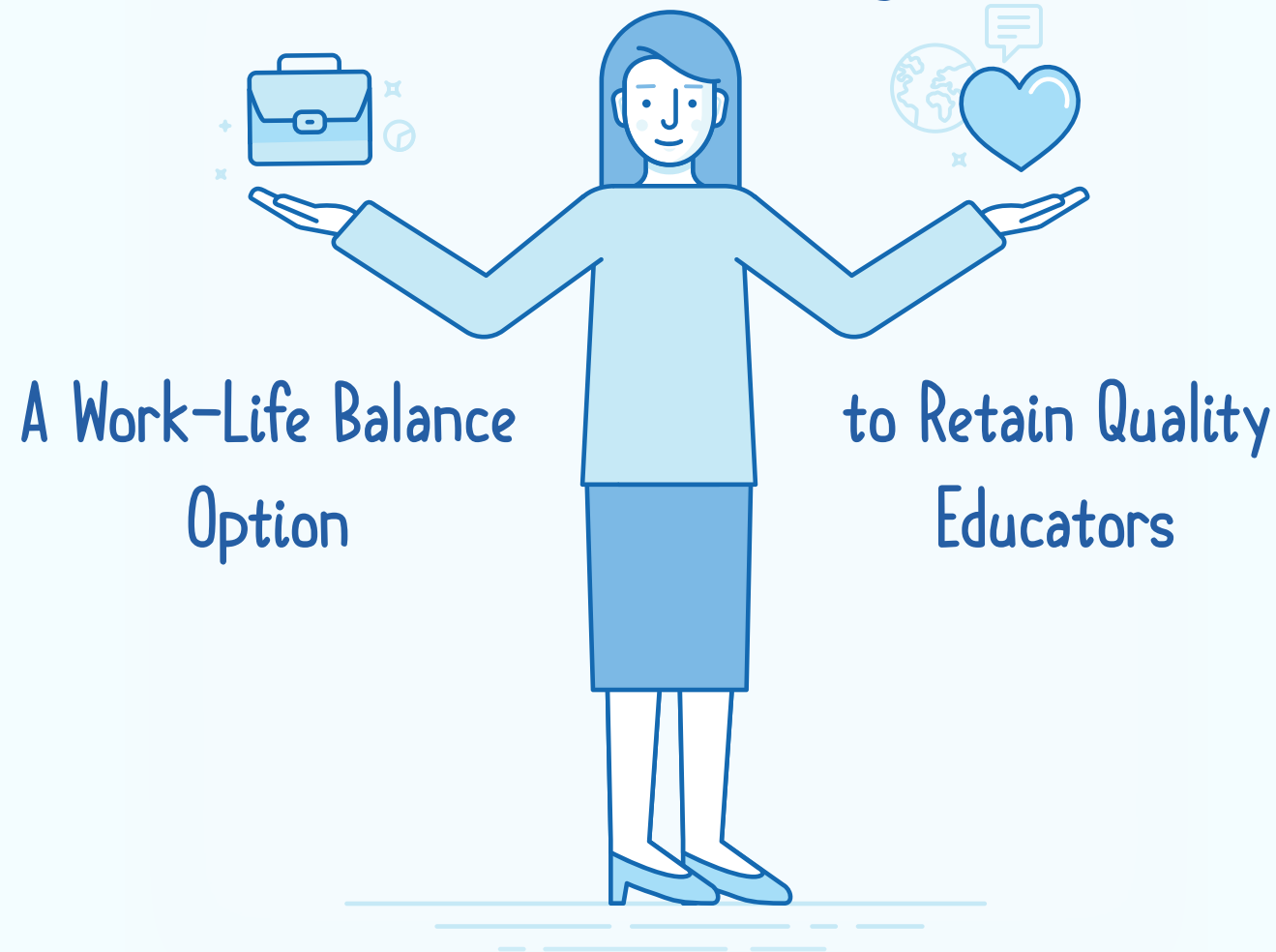


*Dr. Anthony McConnell is the superintendent of schools in Deerfield Public Schools District 109. Anthony began his career as a high school social studies and English language teacher. As a principal, Anthony led his school to recognition by the Department of Education as a National Blue Ribbon School. He is the co-author of the book "The Principled Principal: Ten Principles for Leading Exceptional Schools."*



*Monica Schroeder Ed.D. (@mschroeder6) has served as a public school administrator in Highland Park-Highwood, IL (@NSSD112) since 2005. In April 2018, she became the deputy superintendent of schools. Her 19+ year educational career has included serving as an assistant superintendent, principal, associate principal and teacher. She is active in both the Illinois American Association of School Personnel Administrators (IASPA) and AASPA. She serves as the moderator of the @\_IASPA\_ Twitter handle for IASPA and co-moderates a monthly Twitter chat, #IASPachat, with Dale Fisher. Monica is the chair for the Mentor Committee for IASPA, co-chair of the LBS Committee and serves on the Recognition Committee for AASPA.*

# Job-Sharing:



By Greg Dietz; Assistant Superintendent of HR; Maine Township High School District 207; Park Ridge, IL

In the United States, more and more school districts and educational institutions are experiencing a severe shortage of qualified teachers for a variety of instructional and student services positions. In many states, a record number of positions are going unfilled leading to higher class sizes and an increased number of preparations for existing teachers. Throw in several other factors like low pay, increasing cost of benefits, lack of professional autonomy, increasing compliance requirements, punitive evaluation practices and pension reform, and you've got the perfect storm of factors leading to increased teacher attrition.

Pre-retirement attrition accounts for about two-thirds of all teacher attrition, according to 2016 data published by the United States Department of

Education. Also, a follow-up survey to a 2013 Learning Policy Institute study revealed that more than one in three pre-retirement teachers who left the profession did so for personal reasons, including pregnancy and child care, stating these were extremely or very important factors in their decision to leave teaching. That's a large population of teachers who could be convinced to remain in the profession if more work-life balance employment options were available to them. One way school districts can address their increasing teacher attrition rates is to look inward at their own policies and collective bargaining agreements to determine if opportunities exist to create win-win situations for teachers to keep them actively employed in the profession.

Teacher job-sharing is one option that school districts can consider to maintain quality teachers in the profession. Granted, while working in a job-sharing position those teachers are only serving part-time, the idea is that both job-sharing teachers will remain in the profession and eventually return to full-time teaching assignments once their personal circumstances change or their own children begin to attend school. A school district that couples a job-sharing policy with an in-house daycare program will not only reduce their teacher attrition, but will attract new teachers looking for such work-life balance opportunities.

Job-sharing assignments can take several different forms, but essentially a job-sharing position is an agreement between two teachers and the school district such that two teachers will fulfill 1.0 FTE (full-time equivalent) or more. For example, let's say two teachers want to spend more time at home with their own young children, but also love their jobs as teachers and only need a partial income to meet their financial obligations. For these teachers, they feel like they are receiving the best of both worlds: personal and professional. They get to spend more time with their own children, yet still stay connected with colleagues and in tune with developing instructional technology, while continuing to grow as a professional.

For teachers who opt to work in a job-sharing agreement, their salaries and benefits are usually prorated such that each job-share partner would receive 50 percent of what they would have earned if employed on a full-time basis. Given that most teachers who enter into a job-sharing agreement have a spouse or partner who has access to insurance benefits, most teachers who sign up for a job-sharing assignment opt out of the district's insurance plan. In other situations, the premiums are prorated so each job-sharing teacher pays more for the same insurance benefit as a full-time teacher. Depending on Board policy or the provisions within their collective bargaining agreement, job-sharing teachers often receive experience credit and advance a "step" on the salary schedule just as if they had taught full-time. In other situations, job-sharing teachers do not advance a step until after two years of working on a part-time basis or until returning to full-time employment.

Whether the two job-sharing teachers split the day into a morning or afternoon shift, or they agree work

specific days of the week, there are several options that exist that give flexibility to teachers and serve to increase their work-life balances.

## Option 1:

Teacher A - AM Assignment  
Teacher B - PM Assignment

## Option 2:

Teacher A - Teaches daily for first semester of school year  
Teacher B - Teaches daily for second semester of school year

## Option 3:

Teacher A - Teaches on Mondays and Tuesdays (50%)  
Teacher B - Teaches on Thursdays and Fridays (50%)  
Teachers A & B - Alternate teaching on Wednesdays

## Option 4:

Teacher A - Teaches on Mondays and Tuesdays (40%)  
Teacher B - Teaches Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (60%)

## Option 5:

Teacher A - Teaches Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for Semester 1  
Teacher B - Teaches Tuesdays and Thursdays for Semester 1  
Teachers A & B - Switch assignments for Semester 2

At face value, a job-sharing program may sound like an expensive benefit that many school districts could not afford to implement; however, there are ways it can be structured that may even result in a savings for the school district while maintaining a higher degree of teacher quality. For example, in Maine Township High School District 207, a suburban Chicago school district consisting of 6,370 high school students who attend one of three high school campuses, the typical teacher is assigned five instructional periods plus one period of a supervisory duty (study hall, cafeteria, hallway monitor, learning lab, etc.). Job-sharing teachers are each assigned three instructional periods and no supervisory duty. They both receive 50 percent of what their salary would be had they worked full-time. In essence, each job-sharing agreement in District 207 covers six instructional periods (1.2 FTE) compared to a full-time teacher who covers just five instructional periods. Depending on a district's average teacher salary, that additional section taught by the job-sharing pair of teachers would save the district \$10,000-\$18,000 annually. District 207's collective bargaining



agreement also requires that insurance benefits be prorated and job-sharing teachers do not advance a step on the salary schedule until they've worked two years under such an agreement. This means that job-sharing teachers do not advance on the salary schedule at the same rate as their full-time colleagues. Lastly, since many job-sharing teachers have spouses who work full-time and have access to insurance benefits through the spouses' employers, they end up dropping the school district's insurance coverage ultimately removing three or more lives from the district's insurance plan.

School HR professionals should consider implementing such a program and bargaining the

terms of the program with their representative bargaining units. Many teacher labor unions are in favor of providing their members with workplace employment options and see the advantage of maintaining two dues-paying members for a single full-time position. As a result, the school district can bargain specific provisions to ensure the job-sharing program exists as a cost-neutral or cost-saving benefit. The flipside of the popular 'bird in the hand' proverb, a job-sharing benefit means two existing teachers, each working part-time, is better than one full-time teacher you have yet to hire!



Mr. Greg Dietz serves as the assistant superintendent for HR in Maine Township High School District 207, a position he has held since 2005. With 24 years of administrative experience Greg's responsibilities include labor relations, contract maintenance, collective bargaining, talent acquisition, staff recruitment and policy development. Greg is a founding member of the Illinois affiliate of AASPA, where he served on the IASPA Board of Directors for 10 years as both Member-At-Large and the Membership Chairman. Greg has been a pioneer in the area of innovative talent acquisition practices using digital video interviewing strategies in schools. A former District 207 Teacher of the Year, Greg is in his 31st year serving students and staff in his school district.

# The Road Less Traveled

By Tim Brooks; Associate Superintendent of HR Services;  
Rober Miller; Assistant Superintendent of HR Services;  
Rich Montgomery; Assistant Superintendent of HR Services;  
Capistrano Unified School District San Juan Capistrano, CA

## *Time Well Spent*

Think of your day as a school personnel administrator. Break it down. As a human resources leader, where are you spending the majority of your minutes, hours and days? Hopping from one meeting to the next; responding to a plethora of email requests; constantly navigating difficult conversations; investigating this; negotiating that . . . all the while, making literally a thousand decisions before 5:00 p.m.

The demands of the job make any proactive work very difficult to accomplish. Because of the nature of our jobs as HR leaders, we are seldom able to focus on the 90 percent (those employees who are doing really great work). We have so many teachers and classified employees who go above and beyond the call of duty to make a positive impact in the lives of our students on a daily basis. Most of them will receive very little positive reinforcement or recognition. The question we have posed to ourselves as the HR leaders in our district is simple . . . what can we do to let our employees know how much we appreciate and value them in a way that does not require an inordinate amount of time, yet makes a powerful impact? We did, in fact, choose to go into HR because, as principals, we recognized early on that our employees (teachers, classified employees and fellow administrators) . . . the *people*, were the most important ingredient to the success of our students and school as a whole.

## *Random Intentional Acts of Kindness*

As leaders of the HR department for the fifth largest school district in the state of California, we are constantly trying to figure out new and innovative ways to support the more than 4,500 employees and 50,000 students of our district. So we began researching.

In his book, the *Five Love Languages* (2015), Gary Chapman describes *Words of Affirmation* as one of the deepest human needs . . . the need to feel appreciated. Dr. John Maxwell, in his book, *Winning with People* (2017), shares the following: "Whether we succeed or fail is largely a matter of how well we motivate the human beings with whom we deal . . . success or failure is essentially a matter of human relationships." Sam Walton, founder of Walmart states, "Nothing else can quite substitute for a few well-chosen, well-timed, sincere words of praise. They're absolutely free and worth a fortune." And that's what we decided to do . . . praise the efforts of our employees!

Beginning in August of 2018, the associate and assistant superintendents made the commitment to make personal phone calls on behalf of the principals from around our entire district (63 sites in total). On a monthly basis, our site principals provide us with the name of one certificated and one classified employee who is doing an exceptional job that they would like us to recognize. Our principals provide us with a brief explanation as to

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why they selected these employees to be contacted by us. Then we call them, and we thank them. Each person is informed that he or she was chosen for the reason provided by the principal. The following describes the very simple process that we are using in an effort to make a positive impact in the overall culture of our district.

### 3 Simple Steps to Success:

#### 1. (P)ositive

We make brief, positive phone calls from the associate or assistant superintendent of the HR department at the district office and let employees know, and this is the most important part, that their principal notified us of the great work they have been doing at their site. We specifically describe two to four things they are doing exceptionally well that caught the attention of their site administrators. And then we thank them.

#### 2. (C)all

We personally make phone calls to one certificated and one classified employee per school site, per month. For a district the size of ours, the thought of actually doing this seemed daunting at first. But then, we did the math. For a district of 57 schools, the amount of time we spend making these calls breaks down as follows:

57 total schools	x	2 employees to call per school	=	114 phone calls to make per month
114 calls	x	2 minutes per call	=	228 minutes on the phone per month
228 minutes	÷	60 minutes	=	3.8 hours per month
3.8 hours per month	÷	2 Asst. Supts. making calls	=	1.9 hours spent per month making calls
<b>1.9 hours per month is the time spent to make Positive Calls Home</b>				

Now consider the following:

As HR leaders, we work approximately . . .

22 days per month	x	9 hours per day (approximately) a very conservative number for most people reading this article	=	198 hours worked per month
198 hours per month	÷	1.9 hours spent making calls per month	=	Less than 1%
<b>Less than 1% of our work time is spent making calls to let employees know we value them</b>				

Initially, we contemplated going the email route. But we really wanted this to be personal. We wanted the person who was being recognized to hear our voices and understand how much we really appreciate them. We have found that a phone call is a much better way to convey our appreciation in a heartfelt manner than an email.

#### 3. (H)ome

We place these calls to our employees' home or cell phone number. The rationale behind that decision is twofold: (1) a call placed to a personal number as opposed to a work phone number indicates a greater level of personal connection; (2) if we leave a message, the employees have the opportunity to save the message, which many of our employees have notified us they have been doing.

### Feedback We Have Received

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Once people realize HR is not calling for a "bad reason," they are humbled by the personal touch of the simple thank you and the fact their direct supervisor recommended them. What an honor! *My supervisor was asked for the name of anyone and he/she chose to tell HR about me?* They tell their friends. Their friends gain a different perspective about "the district." They get off the phone knowing their employer truly appreciates them and notices their work. And maybe, just maybe, the district is recognized as consisting of people who personally care about their employees.

We live near one of the most famous stretches of highway . . . Pacific Coast Highway (PCH). Just as one can take a road trip along California's PCH to see some of America's most dramatic coastal views, our PCH initialism reminds us of the dramatic impact a few positive words can have on the life of our employees!

Are you struggling with your own inspiration and energy? Telling someone you appreciate them and value them is energizing. It fosters a feeling of gratitude and optimism in the person receiving (and the person providing) the positive feedback. You will spend most of your time helping others with their problems. Why not take a few minutes to energize yourself, and make a powerful impact in the lives of your employees. If you value your employees, tell them. It really is that simple. You may not get to everyone, but you will be making a difference. And for those you call, and those they know, you have impacted lives in a way you may never be able to quantify. It's not a program. It's not systematic or predictable. It's simple. Who will you call first?



*Tim Brooks has worked in public education for 22 years. He has had the opportunities to lead schools at both middle school and K-8 levels, including opening a new school. Currently, Brooks serves as an associate superintendent of human resource services in a district of more than 4,500 employees and close to 50,000 students. Colleagues comment on his positive impact on culture and care for everyone within the organization. Brooks has led HR services to the highest levels of customer service for this large California district through a consistent outlook of optimism and empathy. This has enhanced the reputation of the district and the ability to recruit and retain the highest performing employees.*



*Robert Miller has worked as a public educator for the last 25 years. He has served in a variety of roles starting as a secondary classroom teacher before becoming an assistant principal and principal for 15 years. He is currently an assistant superintendent, HR services in the Capistrano Unified School District. With experience at both the secondary and elementary education levels, large and small school districts, as well as serving as a principal in a high achieving Title 1 middle school, Miller provides a systematic approach to implement and drive change initiatives and excels in the inclusion of stakeholder input to create and maintain systems to support student success.*



*Rich Montgomery is in his 23rd year in public education. He has served as a classified employee, teacher and was a site level administrator for 11 years. Montgomery also opened a brand new K-8 school located in Irvine, California, as principal, an opportunity he describes as one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of his career. Montgomery is in his fourth year as a HR leader and now serves as assistant superintendent of HR services and uniform complaint officer in the Capistrano Unified School District located in Orange County, California. Montgomery is recognized as a leader in the facilitation of the Interest Based Approach to problem solving and leadership development.*

# Employee Engagement in the Workplace

## *School leaders can influence the culture by how they go about recognizing others*

By Dr. Sara Skretta; Certification Officer; University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Lincoln, NE

As students and teachers bustled through the halls of Lincoln Southwest High School in Lincoln, NE, the strains of “Down by the River” were in the air near the social studies department. If they followed the music to its source, they would have stumbled across Big Mouth Billy Bass, a battery-operated fish.

Billy Bass was the coveted prize bestowed each month on a department within the 1,150-student school that exemplified the spirit of the FISH! Philosophy, a technique to find happiness and energy in the workplace, modeled after the Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle.

Lincoln Southwest High School introduced this approach when it opened in 2002, to build a climate that motivated staff to put forth their best effort every day and be personally engaged in creating a positive environment that promoted student learning and achievement.

The social studies department had received the honor for demonstrating the four basic tenets of FISH!: Play, Make Their Day, Choose Your Attitude and Be Present by assisting with a 9th-grade event at the beginning of the school year. The following month, they passed Billy to another deserving department.



## **Cultivating Community**

When Lincoln Southwest opened as the city’s first new high school since 1968, the school leadership committed, with district support, to create a community of learners in which students, faculty and staff could reach their maximum potential. That commitment included a specific focus on employee engagement.

To inspire staff and maintain high engagement levels, the first staff development program at the beginning of the year took place off-site in a large conference space. Through 2006 and with support from the school’s parent booster club, this type of staff development was the norm. Teachers and staff actively planned the day’s programming to ensure useful and timely training infused with fun. The programming has since returned to the building, but the energy generated has been sustained by staff.

An end-of-the-year gathering held at the same location as the opener celebrated the year’s successes and recognized staff through awards presentations. Sixteen years later, elements of this gathering still exist and are celebrated at the end of each school year.

The school opened with an enrollment of 1,150, twice the predicted 500 students. Sixteen years later, it remains one of the highest enrollment high schools in the city, where open enrollment at high school is permitted. Teachers exceeded their contractual duties, a testament to their engagement. Achievement scores ranked the school in the top half of the district. Students thrived in an optimal educational environment because of the high staff engagement and that achievement continues today.

Employee engagement continues to make a difference at Lincoln Southwest, but that’s not the case everywhere. A 2015 Gallup poll found that 69 percent of teachers reported they either were not engaged or were actively disengaged in their jobs. The survey also found teachers who were actively disengaged missed an average of 2.3 million more days of work nationally each year than engaged teachers.

Clearly, employee engagement is a driver of school culture correlating to student success.

## **Building Foundations**

Studies suggest employee performance improves when an expectation of engagement is embedded in the work culture. Organizations promoting worker engagement (and recognition) tend to increase innovation, productivity and performance.

Superintendents must establish and maintain a culture of employee engagement without expending scarce time or resources. It starts with a foundation that includes these behaviors from school and district leaders:

- **COMMIT AS LEADERS.** Ensure you and your administrative team members are “all in” when establishing employee engagement programs. Commit and follow through. Lip service won’t work.
- **IDENTIFY CURRENT LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT.** How engaged are your employees? Develop (or contract with an outside organizations to create) and administer engagement surveys to faculty and staff. Low-cost and no-cost options are available, including the teacher stakeholder perception surveys from AdvancED, a part of many schools’ accreditation process.
- **COLLECT ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE.** Ask building administrators and teachers to share their perceptions and stories about employee engagement.
- **SHARE THE RESULTS.** Everyone in the district deserves to know what you learned. Assemble focus groups of teachers and staff to discuss survey results in detail. Encourage dialogue that expands on survey results.
- **ENCOURAGE INNOVATION.** With results in hand, encourage building administrators to develop initiatives that fit their grade levels and culture. Encourage partnering with the PTA, booster club or support groups to develop employee engagement programs.
- **REMEMBER SIMPLE STRATEGIES OFTEN PAY THE LARGEST DIVIDENDS.** A parent group might order plastic tumblers with the school logo and present them to the teachers and staff at the beginning of the year filled with goodies and a note of thanks in advance of the work they will perform during the year.

The building leader could convene a periodic stand-up meeting after school to recognize staff members who

received recognition from the outside for their work.

### Praise Pays Off

In his book *Before Happiness*, Shawn Achor contends one instance of praise daily can increase a worker's productivity by 30 percent. Happy people are more productive and tend to repeat behaviors and performance for which they are given recognition. When the praise and recognition are linked to performance objectives and core values, they lead to increased productivity and heightened engagement.

Here are some easy ways to offer recognition and, in the process, boost employee engagement and performance.

- **CATCH 'EM IN THE ACT.** Identify individuals doing things exceedingly well and express appreciation in the moment. Recognition can be swift, not necessarily time consuming. Thank a teacher who never misses playground duty, a principal who handles building conflict well or an administrative assistant who stepped in to assist with an unexpected need.
- **BE SPECIFIC.** Be clear on the behavior you want to recognize. Instead of telling an employee, "You're doing a good job," be specific. "Your data analysis on the school improvement report was outstanding!" Descriptive praise rings true.
- **FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE.** Emphasize why the person's action is important. Don't negate an affirmation by mixing in suggestions. Telling the security officer his diligence at the school entrance helps students feel safe every day reinforces the significance of that person's contribution to the whole. Resist adding, "But you should try smiling more."
- **PERSONALIZE.** Direct recognition to the



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individual, the action and the situation. Not everyone enjoys large public displays of recognition and not every outstanding performance deserves a huge display. Just knowing someone's name can establish your credibility.

- **KEEP IT REAL.** Be sincere and stay true to your style. Don't try to become a cheerleader if you are quiet and reserved as you'll seem insincere.
- **MIX IT UP.** Keep things interesting for everyone. Throw in a unique recognition at an administrative meeting. Present a spirit award to an administrator who participated in the most community forums for an upcoming bond issue.

### Modest Start

Dedicated leadership will drive how your school district recognizes and engages personnel. Are you all in to build engagement? If so, no employee can resist, and the effort will result in a rewarding experience for all stakeholders.

Start with small, foundational steps in adding engagement strategies and employee recognition into the culture of your district. If you are purposeful and sincere, the results will be felt by students and staff alike.

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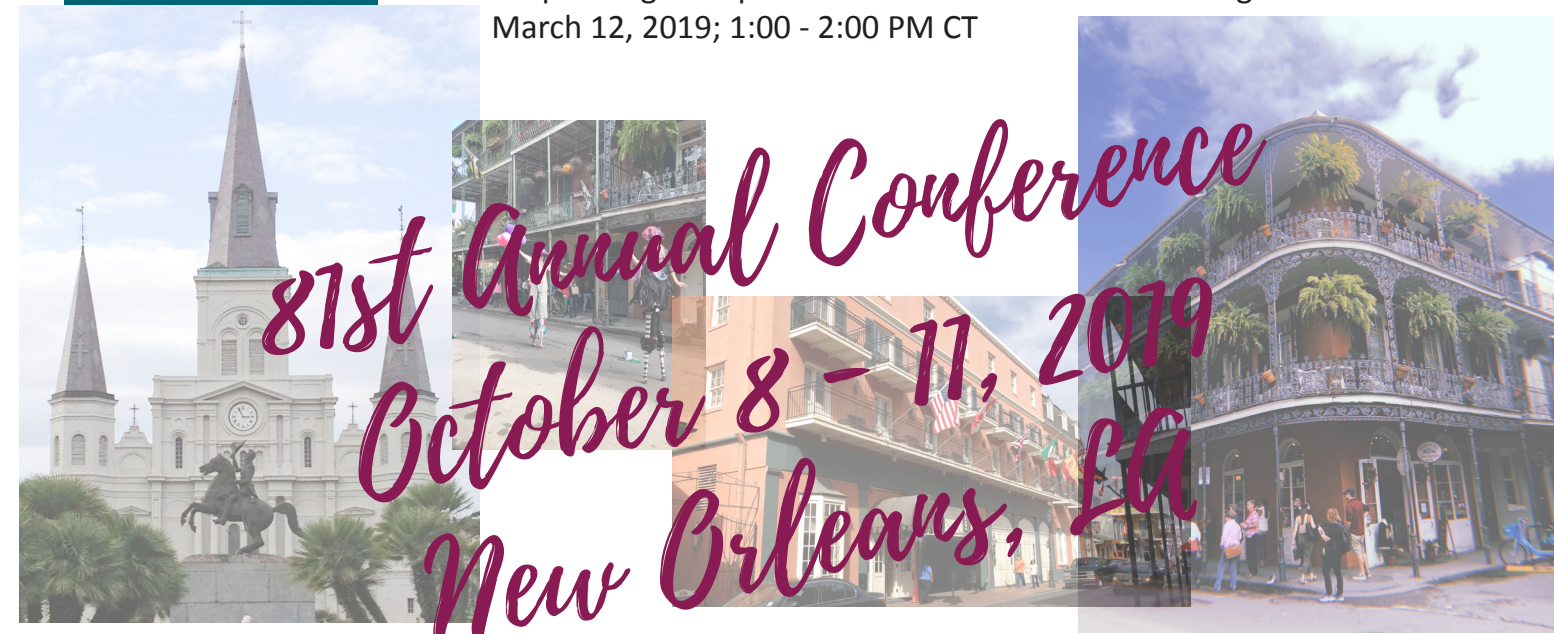
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