

NOVEMBER 2017 - JANUARY 2018

# PERSPECTIVE

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

## Reach for the Stars Phoenix, AZ 2017

### In this Issue:

- Are you Ensuring that the Right People are in the Right Place at the Right Times to do the Right Things?
- The Grit of School Personnel Administration
- Beating the Odds in Your Neighborhood Public School
- According to New Studies, Traditional Interview Methods Don't Work
- Conference Highlights





**PERSPECTIVE**

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American Association of School Personnel Administrators | Est. 1938

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**President’s Corner**

**From the Desk of Dr. Justin Schooley, AASPA President**



I am truly honored to be serving as your AASPA President this coming year. I hold the upmost respect for AASPA and the impact the organization has and continues to have on my professional career. As AASPA enters its 80th year, our organization continues to strive for greatness and excellence. Over the years AASPA has been known for providing premier opportunities for professional development and networking experiences for its members. The AASPA Executive Board and staff looks forward to continuing to serve your needs by providing the tools and opportunities for you to lead your district’s human capital management department.

AASPA has a great deal to celebrate. The 79th Annual Conference was recently held in Phoenix, Arizona. The annual conference is a prime example of how AASPA members enrich our own professional growth and learning opportunities from colleagues from all across the country. There were 609 attendees at the annual conference with more than 100 clinic and ignite sessions and 12 pre-conference sessions.

Noteworthy, in September, we ended our fourth consecutive year financially stable and completely in the black. I am pleased to welcome Jason Liewehr, as President-Elect, and Dr. Connie Graham, Region 6 Representative, back to the Executive Board and welcome the new Region 5 Representative, Brian White, to the Executive Board.

In 1938, when members of the New York City Board of Examiners and faculty of Teacher’s College, Columbia University first meet, who knew 80 years later AASPA would be more than 2,100 members strong and be the premier association for school human capital leaders across the US and internationally. Last year, your Executive Board and staff undertook a much needed and long overdue look at AASPA’s strategic plan; thus, creating a clear plan of action to help guide the work of our organization over the next five years. The action steps that are planned for implementation came directly from member feedback while being mindful of AASPA’s vision, “To be the school human resource association of choice,” which has the responsibility to recognize our impacting student learning in the districts we serve. As a result, our new five-year strategic plan was developed. Located within this edition of the Perspective, you will find an illustration of a broad overview of the strategic plan. Over the next five years, your AASPA Board and staff will tackle these four major goals in efforts of accomplishing AASPA’s vision and mission while continuing in our tradition of excellence:

1. Enhance your membership value, resulting in the Association’s growth and long-term sustainability. We hope to continue to add new member benefits, increase our partnership with state affiliates while working toward efficient methods of communication with you.
2. Optimize the organizational culture, structure, and resources to achieve growth and long-term sustainability. We want to strengthen AASPA’s relationships with internal and external stakeholders including online services accessibility all while maintain financial stewardship the association.
3. Be the recognized advocate regarding the practice and profession of PK-12 human resources. Your membership surveys noted a need for the association to provide resources for advocacy on school HR issues, so AASPA will strive to assist you in building the foundation for influencing not only at the national level at the local and state levels too.
4. Be the premier source for high-quality professional development for PK-12 HR leaders in schools. Our goal is to continue and expand to provide you with high quality professional development that fits your needs while incorporating the Human Capital Leaders in Education Standards. By doing so, we will create a value in the HCLE certification, so it will be recognized as a pre-eminent national PK-12 school HR certification.

The outlined goals are to help the association remain active and strive for excellence while meeting our individual member’s needs. Through action steps and strategies implemented from the strategic plan, we can achieve AASPA’s mission to provide every member with services, resources, and information vital to successful school human resource practices. In the coming months, we will be sharing and providing additional details on each of these four goal areas through various publications, Board Notes to state leaders and emails to all members.

I thank you, again, for giving me the opportunity to serve you as AASPA’s President. Along with the AASPA Executive Board, I encourage you to make your mark and be part of AASPA’s next 80 years by actively getting involved in your association as we “Master, Motivate, Move” toward celebrating another exciting year which will culminate in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for the 80th Annual Conference, October 9-12, 2018.

Best regards with my sincere appreciation,

Justin L. Schooley, Ed.D.  
AASPA President



# Are You Ensuring that the Right People are in the Right Place and at the Right Times to do the Right Things? Career Ladder and Succession Planning are the Key Strategies!

By Andrea Anthony, Ed.D., J.D., Rutherford Co. Schools, Murfreesboro, TN

In human capital reform, there are two strategies that assist in retaining and boosting effective employees: career ladder and succession planning. These strategies help employers to substitute non-effective employees consistently with those who have a greater impact on the organization's outcome. The goal is to develop strong talent pools in all key areas—not just for executive positions.

Career ladders assist in the development of an individual career plan and goals. Career ladder drills down to the skills and training required to obtain those goals. Career ladders are often called career pathways or tracks or lattices. All of these titles provide roles that expand beyond the traditional managerial or supervisory realm. These movements can be vertically between jobs or horizontally across departments. Through examining these pathways, an employee can diversify their role in the organization.

Career ladders are not payment for non-strategic extra duties; such as, sponsoring clubs or supervising the cafeteria during lunch or attending professional development opportunities to increase your knowledge base. Career ladder opportunities will be evaluated, and performance feedback will be given. Remember that career ladder is a strategy for achieving an organization's success and future growth. Succession planning is then the orderly movement made by employees to these broader and encompassing duties.

Succession planning that includes identifying and developing future candidates is a top human resources issue, which needs immediate attention (Bersin and Associates, 2011). Employers are struggling to fill key positions due to what they identify as a shortage on skills. Why do organizations not take a more proactive approach to succession planning? Is it due to a lack of

human resources expertise? Or, is it due to a lack of understanding of implementing the plan? Let the numbers tell the story. What positions will need successors?



Succession planning has a great impact on employee engagement levels. It motivates them with incentives, career opportunities and cultivates a culture of promotion. It increases retention rates, cost effectiveness, efficiency and values the employee's knowledge, experience and skills. Succession planning builds upon analyzing future needs by looking at the employer's future strategies and goals. It then pinpoints key competencies necessary to fill the position. Next, you analyze our people through performance reviews and exploring an employee's potential. You can use additional tools to assist in this process like a career orientations inventory test. As the employer, you must look at creating

key developmental plans for each employee, primarily an individual plan of success to identify any skills gap. Professional development opportunities should stretch the employee toward the next level of job competencies. To make this happen seamlessly, the employer must communicate effectively and make sure the employee understands the purpose of what they are doing. This will help them to act as their advocate in this future career opportunity. **The final step to an efficient selection process ensures that the right people are in the right place and doing the right things at the right time.** This process will provide equal opportunity to progress from both inside and outside of the group being stretched forward. Employers want an acceptable balance between your own grown talent pool and the external pool of employees.

Do you use the nine-box chart tool for examining talent and making talent decisions? The nine-box chart tool is a concise succession planning tool. It provides a way to look at the relationship between the individual's future potential and their actual performance. This tool helps identify employees who are being considered to be the successors for the positions, have high-potentials and staff for whom a change may be desired. Placement in the nine-box chart is based upon a three-point scale (i.e., low, moderate, high). The nine-box categories are labeled according to the employer's needs. In the example below, High Performance/High Growth Potential category is labeled "Superstars" (ZurickDavis, 2015). This box provides a visually appealing way to look at the talent during the review process. It helps employment teams to have discussions that are meaningful around the talent, calibrate a shared agreement on expectations and build ownership for developing talent across the organization.

## How to Identify Future Leaders

Use this nine-box grid to stratify an organization's talent pool by assessing performance and potential. Each box also contains a possible descriptor for each rating.

P E R F O R M A N C E	High/low Dependable professionals	4	High/medium Development opportunities	7	High/high Superstars	9
	Medium/low Borderline talent	3	Medium/medium Core talent	5	Medium/high Potential stars	8
	Low/low Exit opportunities	1	Low/medium At risk	2	Low/high Intriguing challenges (or too new to assess)	6
			GROWTH POTENTIAL			

Source: ZurickDavis, 2015

There are five common mistakes to avoid with a succession plan: 1) keeping the plan a secret and expecting an employee to self-identify; 2) underestimating the talent inside your organization; 3) focusing only on hard skills;



4) withholding talent and development opportunities; and 5) considering only upward succession. An effective plan is where the employer rewards managers for not holding onto their top employees rather than promoting them. Managers must be held responsible for their role in succession planning. There must be active and visible support of the senior leaders.

Moving up the career ladder to senior management is not for everyone. Some employees want to “take up roots” where they land. Employers must create career tracks for non-managerial positions so employees who have specialized knowledge can still build their career. But for those who are driven and willing to stretch beyond their current existence, a coordinated transfer of knowledge and skills can help an organization not to lose institutional stability and health. It is important to recognize that employees have a stake in the team. They are a part of the culture of success.



*Andrea Anthony, Ed.D. began her secondary education career 24 years ago and is recognized 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. She has also served as an assistant principal, director of K-12 summer schools, Tennessee’s NASSP Principal of the Year, chairman of Tennessee’s Mid-Cumberland Coordinators and the secondary coordinator of education and Title IX compliance coordinator. While serving as an assistant principal, Anthony got her second doctorate in law, a doctorate of jurisprudence, citing much of administration dealings with the law and employing a world class staff. She added her SHRM HR generalist certification and is involved with her district’s policy team, recruitment and job fair team and the state’s retention team.*

# THE GRIT OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

## 7 Habits to Develop GRIT in K-12 HR

By Jason Liewehr, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD, Carrollton, TX

In the book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, author Angela Duckworth takes an in-depth look at grit and gives us another entry into the world of understanding what makes us who we are. As psychology attempts to corner the market on great educational leadership topics, school human resources offices need to pay careful attention to this discipline. Duckworth defines “grit” as “the tendency to sustain interest and effort toward long term goals.” This is a cornerstone in the world of K-12 HR.

This got me thinking about how in K-12 HR we have an ongoing workload both literally and mentally that never seems to end. Will we meet our goal? How much longer do we have to complete our tasks? The grind of the summer months for K-12 HR administrators can wear us down quickly if you don’t persevere through the long hours, heat and exhaustion. So as I began my most recent marathon training, I came across an article in the June issue of *Runners World* which offered some advice about completing a marathon using grit. As an avid runner and marathon participant, the topic of ‘Grit’ resonated with me. During my typical 30-60 minute morning runs, I get a lot of “think time.” As Duckworth points out, this practice is something that can be developed over time.

The following are seven habits which will help you develop grit while working in K-12 HR.

### 1 Find your purpose.

Why are you here? What brought you to HR? What brought you to education? Having a deep desire to work with people and manage the teeter totter between employee rights and the needs of the district can give meaning to the work you do. We should be champions for the individual as well as the organization. As was stated at the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (TASPA) luncheon last year, “We are in the business of maximizing human potential.” This phrase perfectly summarizes our overall purpose as human resource personnel.

## HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERS IN EDUCATION CERTIFICATION

In collaboration with Battelle for Kids, AASPA developed the certification program for human capital leaders in pre-K-12 education.

### NEXT VIRTUAL COHORT

January 24 - March 21 / 2pm to 4pm ET (Every Wednesday)

### NEXT BLENDED COHORTS

February 27 – March 1, 2018 / 8am to 4pm ET (Each Day) / Phoenix, AZ

For more information, please visit [www.aaspa.org](http://www.aaspa.org) or email at [kelly@aaspa.org](mailto:kelly@aaspa.org).

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## 2

### Don't push yourself to the limit. Find your sweet spot.

Burn out is too easy when you try to make everyone happy. It's impossible to make everyone happy. We have to keep ourselves from taking on too much. We need to utilize all of our resources all of the time. We can limit burnout by continually developing ourselves and our peers. With continuous development for us and those around us, it allows us to take on more and share our work with others so that we can accomplish what needs to be done.



## 3

### Warm up your body and mind.

I love getting up early and starting my day with a run. For others, it may be weights, the elliptical, the bike or maybe boot camp. After getting into this routine, you may find it energizes you for the day. It provides necessary think time.

Once at work, start your day off with a discussion with your peers about an interesting article or current events in public education. Utilize sources like LinkedIn or Twitter to find the most buzzed about topic. Or subscribe to blogs that focus on education. Keep on top of the trends in our business to stay relevant and aware.

## 4

### Make fewer choices.

Choose less. Develop practices and strategies that reduces the need to make mundane, daily decisions. Train your staff to handle unexpected events. When calls flood your office, having a knowledgeable staff that can assist and answer questions will help keep your office sustainable. Be able to handle the inevitable surprises by developing procedures that can handle most of the unexpected and sudden work. Save your best decision making skills for the times when it's truly needed. Our brains can't make too many decisions in a given day. We struggle making good decisions even more when we're stressed.

I liken this to your staff selection process. I tell my principals, "if you spend 20 percent more time on the selection process, you'll spend 80 percent less time on the coaching and development process."

## 5

### Practice "Calm Conversations."

When the going gets rough early on, we often think, "Oh great, difficult people are already taking up my day, and it's only September. We have a long way to go to get through this school year."

Don't complain or vent. When your effort and volume of work increases, practice accepting it and realizing it's part of the job and an opportunity for growth. We are working administrators who sometimes need to work a little longer and work from home. This anxiety can build up and start taking a physical toll on your muscles. Don't tense up. Accepting the workload and telling yourself that you're doing the work now in order to become more efficient in the future will help. After a rough day, cue the transition to a less stressful state at home.



## 6

### Follow stress with rest.

After a hectic day where negative employees demand your time, principals complain that you didn't hire somebody fast enough and your third grievance in two weeks drops on your desk, take some time for yourself. Even those preparing for a marathon follow up a 20 mile run with a day of rest at some point. Muscles aren't built to handle stress. They're built to get stronger. Your brain is the same way. It's not built for stress, but we make ourselves believe that we're rewarded with in the form of relief when we worry and stress about events that turn out to not be so bad.

You deserve to be happy. Find some happiness outside of the workplace. Find it at home, with your family, pets or friends. Breathe deeply. Zen is out there. Turn off your phone and put your stress to the side. Before you tackle the stress, spend some time envisioning what would be the perfect outcome if having to face stress head on. And then ask yourself to define the first three steps to get you there. Come back to work refreshed and ready to tackle the impossible. Don't fight anxiety, because it takes emotional energy. Know that your emotions are neutral and tap back into the purpose you deliberately stated in your first habit.

## 7

### Reframe negative interactions with people.

We're in the people business. It's what we do. We have to balance efficiency with relationships. Our relationships with others matter. Whether it's the first year teacher or the 25 year vet, holding crucial conversations with these individuals can be challenging and it wears us down. Use these interactions to learn about yourself and the other people. Reframe the conversation so that it has a positive intent. We're not out to get people (contrary to what the unions think). We just want learning to continue for all.

Use assertive communication techniques to maintain emotional control. Make eye contact, be confident in what you're saying and most of all, go back to number one. Know your purpose, and be sure everything you do relates to it.



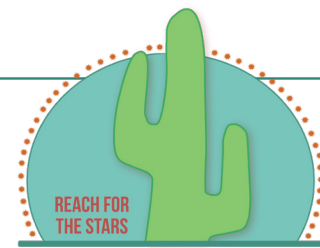
Jason Liewehr currently serves as the director of personnel for the Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD in Carrollton, TX. Jason began his career with the Birdville ISD in 2000 as a high school math teacher. For the past nine years, Jason has worked in the Department of Personnel in C-FB ISD, serving as assistant director and director. He holds a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics from the University of North Texas.

Jason has worked closely the North Central Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators providing support for their annual Teacher Job Fair held in Arlington, TX. The job fair hosts 70 districts and charter schools and has registered 2000-3000 candidates annually. Jason has served on the AASPA Executive Board as the region 5 representative for four years and is currently president-elect.



# Conference

## Highlights



### Reach for the Stars | Phoenix, AZ 2017

In October of 2017, AASPA reached for the stars as we set out to provide our members with a week of quality professional development, networking opportunities and entertainment. This resulted in the AASPA 79th Annual Conference in Phoenix, AZ - a four day event that attracted school personnel administrators from all around the country. The conference was a huge success, drawing a record 609 attendees with more than 50 exhibit booths, 12 pre-conference sessions, 100 clinic/ignite sessions and adding another page to the Association's prodigious 79-year history.



AASPA Executive Board



AASPA Presidents Council

### 2017-2018 Election Results



#### President-Elect

Jason Liewehr  
Director of Secondary Personnel  
Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD  
Carrollton, TX  
liewehrj@cfbisd.edu



#### Region 5 Representative

Brian White  
Assistant Superintendent of HR  
Auburn-Washington USD 437  
Topeka, KS  
whitebri@usd437.net



#### Region 6 Representative

Dr. Connie Graham  
Assistant Superintendent of HR  
Kershaw County School District  
Camden, SC  
connie.graham@kcsd.schools.net

#### 2018-2019 Executive Board Nominations:

It's time again to think about nominations for next year's Executive Board. The positions up for election are President-Elect, Region 1 Representative and Region 2 Representative.

Special Recognitions Award was presented to outgoing board member:

- Dr. Larry Reznicek - Immediate Past President

The gavel was passed from 2016-2017 President, Rick Arnett, to 2017-2018 President, Dr. Justin Schooley.

The 2017-2018 Budget was approved.

### AASPA 25Year Members Recognized

AASPA would like to honor its 25-year members for their dedication and service to AASPA.

Carrie Durley  
John Knebl  
Fredericka Hayes

# Recognizing

## AASPA's Finest

#### INDIVIDUAL AWARDS:

#### HERB SALINGER PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recipient: Dr. Justin Schooley

Given to an active member of AASPA who has distinguished him/herself in personnel administration at the local, state/province and/or international level; is involved and a contributing participant in personnel functions and/or programs; whose contributions have had significant impact on public education at many levels; is a skilled manager of change and is creative in his/her approach to personnel administration; and is currently serving in a personnel administrative position.



Dr. Justin Schooley



Dr. Andrea Anthony

#### NEW MEMBER AWARD

Recipient: Dr. Andrea Anthony

Given to an active member of AASPA who has less than three years of experience in the field. This individual has demonstrated involvement at the local, state/province, national and/or international level though new to the field and has distinguished him/herself in personnel administration through contributions that have had an impact on public education. Must be an active AASPA member and currently serving in a personnel position.

#### ARCH S. BROWN AWARD

Recipients: TASP (TX) and IASPA (IL)

Given on the basis of affiliate activities in these areas: communications with members, member participation, affiliate conferences, special projects, cooperative activities and other contributions.



Mike Johann accepting for IASPA



Lolly Guerra accepting for TASP

#### HR SPECIALISTS AWARD

Recipients: Lisa Perri (Region 2) and Dee Pommerening (Region 6)

Given to an individual whose contributions have had significant impact on the efficiency of the human resources office and to the field of human resources; who has at the local, state/province, national, and/or international level distinguished him/herself through leadership service; and is a collaborative, contributing participant in personnel functions and/or programs. Active AASPA membership is not required. One recipient may be selected annually from each region.



Lisa Perri (Region 2)



Dee Pommerening (Region 6)

#### SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Recipient: Emily Douglas-McNab

Presented to individuals who have made substantial contributions to AASPA, advancing or enhancing the professional visibility of the association and its purposes and/or the field of school personnel administration.



Emily Douglas-McNab



McKinney ISD

#### THE NEWSLETTER AWARD PROGRAM

Recipient: McKinney ISD

Open to all state/province/private organizations that publish a newsletter for their members at least annually. Newsletters are judged on content and layout.



# 2017 Conference Photos



Keynote and speed painter, Tim Decker.



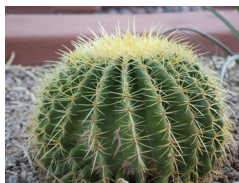
AASPA President, Justin Schooley, Ed.D.



David Nelson, keynote, speaking on Crucial Conversations.



Winner of the LBS 5K at breakfast.



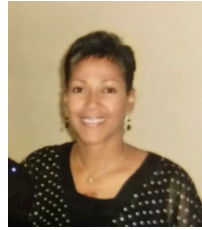


# 2016 Leon Bradley Scholarship Recipients



**JENNY HOCHMILLER** is a high school teacher of seven years in the Montbello neighborhood of Denver, recently transitioning into the world of school leadership. She started the first year of her career teaching in the center of the largest turnaround plan in her district's history, phasing out her

original school over the next three years, moving her to a nearby smaller school birthed from the reform efforts. Through the constant transition of initiatives and staff turnovers (including 5 principals), she continues to hold tight to this community, investing herself to become the best educator worthy enough to teach the incredible students coming in contact with her every day. She has been fortunate enough to (1) coach the cross country and track teams, (2) teach math, English language development, and special education, (3) serve as a mentor teacher and leader to many individuals, teams, and projects and (4) and be recognized for her strong instruction and positive relationships with students. When Jenny's off the clock, she loves spending quality time with her husband of six years, who she met during their college years at the University of Northern Colorado.



**KYLLE E. HODGES** resides in Denver, Colorado and is a senior undergraduate student at the University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) Center for Urban Education (Greeley, CO), completing her degree in Special Education K-12, with Teacher Licensure.

The UNCO Center for Urban Education teacher education program requires students to work in classrooms as teacher apprentices under the guidance and support of a mentor throughout their undergraduate program. Since enrolling in the UNCO Center for Urban Education program, Kylle has demonstrated great qualities of being is a self-directed learner, excellent communicator, compassionate, and a reflective and thoughtful student.

Kylle was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease in December of 1992. Despite ongoing health challenges, she has remained passionate and unwavering in her desire to complete her education and pursue her dream of becoming a special education teacher. Kylle currently works part-time as a paraprofessional in the morning and attends classes at UNCO Center for Urban Education in the afternoon. She is also a wife and mother of two sons, one in college and one in high school.



**DARIS JOHNSON JR.** is in pursuit of a Bachelors degree in special and elementary education at Grand Canyon University and works at Dundalk High School, outside of Baltimore, MD. Possessing a strong passion for working with high risk youth, he has served youth in multiple settings varying from after-school programs, youth detention centers, and all levels of education. Providing youth with healthy outlets to develop and express themselves away from troubling activities is his desire and strength. In addition, Daris has served his local community by assisting with the building of a local church. Daris Johnson Jr. is the husband of Ashlee Johnson and the father of a three-year old son.



**THE LEON BRADLEY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**, is intended for minority college students pursuing the teaching profession and/or school leadership. The scholarship is named in honor of the late Leon Bradley, the first African American president of AASPA (1983 - 1984). Announcement of the award occurs at the Annual Conference in October each year. This award is a one-time, non-renewable grant. The first award was given in 2004. Funds for the scholarship are raised through fundraisers at the Annual Conference and through donations from individuals and groups.

Any members or organizations may send tax deductible contributions for the Leon Bradley Scholarship Fund to the AASPA headquarters at 11863 W. 112th Street, Suite 100, Overland Park, KS 66210.

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**AASPA'S 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
OCTOBER 9 - 12, 2018**





# Beating the Odds in Your Neighborhood Public School: It Starts with Staffing!

By Mark D. Benigni, Ed. D., Barbara A. Haeffner, Daniel Crispino, Meriden Public Schools, Meriden, CT

Innovative staffing rapidly transformed an urban low performing school with high poverty and a large minority population into a model school through progressive management/labor collaboration, a focus on climate and culture, and creative instructional strategies.

## Setting the Stage

John Barry is an economically challenged elementary school with 87 percent of their students receiving free and reduced lunch benefits, 84 percent minority population and many of these students also receive special education services (19 percent), and English Learner (16 percent) support. With years of depressed

test scores and troubling climate data, Barry was on the states' radar for a potential State Department of Education takeover. The union president, principal and superintendent met with the entire staff and explained that we could no longer accept the same results; and if things did not improve, Barry would be mandated to become a state oversight school. So how did Barry become a model school that now the state encourages others to visit to learn from Barry's successful experience?

## The Action Plan

To beat the odds, the school leadership team developed specific turnaround strategies focused on creating

a sense of urgency, built buy-in from team members, secured student-centered staff, embraced engaging curriculum, utilized data from common assessments and focused on student and family engagement. Concurrently, changes in staff led to a new positive climate with a reenergized faculty of enthusiastic and supportive teachers having high expectations for all students.

The Barry community committed to three essential belief statements:

1. High expectations for all, coupled with a culture of no blame, leads to increased student achievement.
2. Additional learning time that is filled with engaging, personalized, technology rich learning, leads to greater student success.
3. Increased attendance and improved school climates promote improved academic performance, creating schools where students and staff want to be.

## Collaboration and Partnerships

The transformation of John Barry Elementary School started with the consensus that current student results were not acceptable! With that agreement in place, management and the union partners fended off state control and created internal accountability structures. A highly competitive American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Innovation Grant provided Barry's students with 100 additional minutes of instruction and enrichment each day (the equivalent of 40 additional school days). Innovations included an expanded day school, staggered teacher work schedules, teacher stipends, use of outside providers in the school and teacher transfers without the need for a side letter or memorandum of understanding.

During the 100 additional minutes each day, Barry's teachers partnered with community agencies to provide enrichment activities that both improved student engagement, and provided an underserved population with opportunities to experience cultural activities deepening their background knowledge. Enrichment

opportunities extend beyond the curriculum and include additional time to explore healthy lifestyles, STEAM and music. Barry's community partners, such as the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club and Valentin Karate provide staffing and specialized enrichment activities, while working side by side with our teachers.

## Culture of High Expectations

Led by our staff and community partners, Barry capitalized on improved school culture and redoubled their efforts to establish a culture of high expectations. A review of student performance data at Barry indicated significant underperformance in key student academic indicators. Equally concerning was Barry's high chronic absenteeism rate and the number of suspensions. We knew we had to remove internal/external barriers and ensure higher-level learning for all students. Given this sense of urgency, it was clear that major changes at Barry needed to be made to create a culture of high expectations for students, staff and families. Transformation strategies were needed to encompass all areas of leadership, teaching and learning, professional development, curriculum and assessment, climate and parental partnerships. This meant having courageous conversations with teachers and school-based administration; ultimately this meant ensuring that staff were all in this together.

Recognizing that teachers and administrators were being asked to implement changes that require learning new skills, adopting new practices and implementing new leadership strategies, the district provided extensive professional development to support personalized learning for staff.



Academic interventions included additional reading, math and special education support. The school also implemented "The Barry Way," Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Responsive Classroom.

To build the home-school partnership in establishing high expectations for students, a Family Resource Center was created at Barry and one of our Family School Liaisons was assigned to work with parents providing wraparound services, including home visits to support families.



## Engagement for Students and Staff

In addition to the engaging electives offered through the expanded day schedule, John Barry's digital transformation focused on meaningful technology integration to promote student engagement, personalize learning, and provide targeted and immediate feedback to students. In addition to a 67 seat state-of-the-art Technology Center, a SMART Board was installed in every classroom and a 1:1 Chromebook program put educational technology in the hands of every student. Classrooms are flexible learning environments that support both whole group instruction and teacher modeling, as well as, personalized instruction. Through strategic partnerships with digital content providers, students are able to access personalized, self-paced and differentiated math, reading and literacy materials through ST Math, myON, and Imagine Learning. District-wide implementation of Google Apps for Education further supported technology integration in the classroom.

Teacher professional development has been and continues to be a key factor in ensuring technology is being used to actively engage students and improve student outcomes. This has included a tiered and differentiated approach that provides product specific training (SMART Board, myON, ST Math, Imagine Learning), content specific training through math and reading coaches, as well as, pedagogical best practices through Redbird Advanced Learning online Blended Learning Modules. Large group, small group and 1:1 professional learning sessions with district Technology Integration Specialists provide personalized learning for all staff. This comprehensive approach has led to visible transformations in the classrooms.

## The Results

With our student-centered team in place, high expectations for all, and actively engaged all stakeholders, Barry was braced for success.



Barry's student growth data exceeded district targets and state averages. SBAC Spring 2015 and SBAC Spring 2016 results for Barry significantly exceeded state growth percentages. While the state gains were 3.3 percent on ELA and 3.9 percent on math, Barry's ELA gains were 12.3 percent and 13.5 percent in math. Equally important was that all tested grades (3-5) exceeded state growth percentages and that climate data reflected a much improved school culture. The positive changes in school culture, led by our dedicated staff, have created a welcoming and caring school climate where student attendance

has shown great improvement. Chronic absenteeism decreased from 21 percent in 2014-2015 to 9 percent in 2015-2016, the most improved attendance rate in the district. Classroom referrals decreased 68 percent from 854 in 2013-2014 to 276 in 2015-2016. Suspensions decreased 91 percent from 77 in 2013-2014 to 7 in 2015-2016. In addition Barry's data on the Meriden School Climate Survey for teachers, parents and students show positive results. Barry's student responses on the School Climate Survey indicate that 97 percent of students perceive teachers are "fair," "caring" and "motivate them to learn." Barry has also seen the highest completion rate among parents with 96 percent of parents completing the 2016-2017 School Climate Survey. Barry's parent responses indicate that 96 percent of parents are happy that their child is attending Barry.

John Barry Elementary School's staff and students efforts led the school to be selected as a 2017 Model School for making dramatic and innovative improvements in learning by the International Center for Leadership in Education.

When students, staff and families work together, believe in all children, increase learning time, embrace technology tools and not accept failure—schools can beat the odds and assure that that—Here, Students Succeed.



Mark D. Benigni, Ed.D., has been an educator for over twenty years and begins his eighth year as Superintendent of the Meriden Public Schools. Dr. Benigni served as a special education teacher, assistant principal, principal and elected Mayor of the City of Meriden. He has presented at national conferences, taught doctorate classes, and published numerous articles. Mark was recognized as a 2015 Education Week Leaders to Learn From and in 2017 the Meriden Public Schools was a recipient of the Consortium for School Networking (COSN), the International Center for Leadership in Education Model School's Award, and was featured by George Lucas Educational Foundation's Edutopia. Dr. Benigni was a recipient of the Ten Outstanding Young American award by the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, and he is currently the co-chair of the Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents, as well as Secretary of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents.

As a former teacher leader, technology education consultant, and district technology supervisor, Barbara brings a vast array of experience with curricula content and technology integration. She has presented at the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), American Association of School Administrators (AASA), UCONN Executive Leadership Program, UCONN NEAG School of Education, Florida Educational Technology Conference (FETC) and CT Educators Computer Association (CECA). While in Meriden, she has led the district's digital transformation and transition to a student-centered learning curriculum. She has authored a number of publications as well as has been featured in many. Barbara has welcomed many visitors and guests to the Meriden Public Schools to see the digital transformation in action.



Dan Crispino successfully taught first grade for 18 years. His students have consistently made some of the best academic gains in the district. As a teacher and administrator, Dan understands success starts with a positive school climate. He uses data to drive decisions, maximizes time for students and staff, and recognizes technology can personalize learning. He is a graduate of the UCONN Urban Administrator Preparation Program and UCAPP Administrator's Residency for School Turnaround, was district coordinator for Expanded Learning Time, and presented at the International Center for Leadership in Education Model Schools Conference.





# All in

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## HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT | DECEMBER 7 – 8, 2017

8:00 a.m. each day | Albuquerque, NM

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

- 1 Learn the Best Practices of Recruitment and Retention in today's PK-12 environment
- 2 Develop strategies to better organize your HR Department
- 3 Learn how to connect HR to student learning and performance
- 4 Gain knowledge on the ever changing federal regulations effecting school HR



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Tim Hodges, Ph.D. | Director of Research | Gallup's Education Practice

### ADDRESSING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE: STRATEGIES FOR HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERS

The national teacher shortage is real – fewer people are entering teacher preparation programs and fewer graduates of those programs are choosing to enter the classroom. Paradoxically, the national shortage of quality teachers is highly localized – some schools do a great job of attracting and retaining quality teachers. This session will review these findings and offer some strategies for how to address the teacher shortage by attracting, engaging, and retaining high quality teachers.

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- HR Directors
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- Assistant Superintendents
- Principals
- Business Official
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And don't forget to join us on the second and fourth Tuesday every month for our #K12Talent Twitter chats. Discuss topics like interviewing, recognitions, hiring remorse, preparing for new school years with other human capital professionals.

Don't forget to connect with us on our other social media sites!



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**Vision:** AASPA will be the school human resources association of choice.

**Membership: Enhance membership value, resulting in Association growth and long-term sustainability.**

**Goal 1: Add new member benefits to appeal to target audiences.**

**Strategies:**

- Innovate benefits based on each member's interests/careers/tasks.
- Build an online system that allows potential members to test-drive membership for a short period before joining.

**Goal 2: Increase membership through partnerships with state affiliates.**

**Strategies:**

- Provide incentives for state affiliates to market and promote AASPA to state members.
- Provide incentives for state affiliates who agree to collect AASPA dues.

**Goal 3: Design membership renewal process to increase communication and provide efficiency.**

**Strategies:**

- Provide multiple avenues for members to join and renew membership with AASPA in an efficient user-friendly platform.

**Goal 4: Increase participation in committees and other volunteer activities of the association.**

**Strategies:**

- Utilize marketing and partnerships to help grow AASPA's leadership structure.

**Organizational Performance: Optimize the organizational culture, structure and resources to achieve growth and long-term sustainability.**

**Goal 1: Strengthen internal and external stakeholder relationships and involvement.**

**Strategies:**

- Expand relationships with external educational associations.
- Build relationships between AASPA and state affiliates by providing additional opportunities to connect and network; develop affiliate benefits; connect state affiliates for better collaboration.
- Expand AASPA's Business Partner relations to grow member resources and fiscal commitments.
- Design opportunities to expand the development and diversity of AASPA internal leaders.
- Annually survey membership engagement.

**Goal 2: Enhance online services to create a valuable user experience.**

**Strategies:**

- Design and develop AASPA.org to increase effective member communications, incorporate new member benefits and provide a positive end-user experience.
- Expand online bookstore to better align books with HR categories and develop new opportunities to purchase publications.
- Create an interactive professional development page to allow members to access more information.

**Goal 3: Provide and support learning opportunities for AASPA staff in areas of school HR as well as personal professional growth to better serve the association.**

**Strategies:**

- Schedule opportunities for staff to annually attend sessions on school HR.
- Hold association memberships for staff in related job functions.

**Goal 4: Expand organizational financial stewardship.**

**Strategies:**

- Evaluate all meeting revenue and expenses to determine profitable locations to hold events.
- Broaden revenue streams of publications and advertising through increased marketing, membership, sales and new developments.
- Build upon the operational fund balance minimum, which covers all operational and organizational expenses for one year including conferences.

**Advocacy: Be the recognized advocate regarding the practice and profession of PK-12 human resources.**

**Goal 1: Be the resource of choice on school HR for federal government advocacy.**

**Strategies:**

- Increase the number of relationships with key legislators, decision makers at the national/federal level.
- Develop, write and distribute original content on school HR issues for internal and external use of members and organizations.

**Goal 2: Build advocacy support to state affiliates to help influence state-level policies affecting school HR.**

**Strategies:**

- Develop supportive materials to assist in lobbying at both the state and national level.

**Goal 3: Elevate the voice and influence of individual school leaders in public policy.**

**Strategies:**

- Provide easy access to accurate information on important issues and individuals involved in national change in PK-12 human resources.

**Professional Development: Be the premier source for high-quality professional development for HR leaders in schools.**

**Goal 1: Provide quality professional development aligned with the Human Capital Leaders in Education (HCLE) Standards.**

**Strategies:**

- Incorporate HCLE Standards in all professional development events produced by AASPA.

**Goal 2: Human Capital Leaders in Education (HCLE) will be recognized as the pre-eminent PK-12 HR certification.**

**Strategies:**

- Provide a variety of opportunities for participation in the HCLE certification program.
- Develop a comprehensive HCLE re-certification process by working with the advisory committee.
- Develop a comprehensive HCLE state endorsement program.

**Goal 3: Expand the delivery of engaging, relevant professional learning experiences through a variety of platforms.**

**Strategies:**

- Establish local/regional opportunities for professional development and networking.
- Expand the Annual Conference and regional event opportunities for attendees and sponsors.
- Develop and deliver a variety of virtual professional development opportunities.



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According to new studies,  
traditional interview methods don't work.  
Here's what you should do instead.

By Nick Montgomery and Katy Smith, TalentEd, Shawnee, KS

If your school's applicant evaluation processes rely on subjective measures — such as interviews, resumés and cover letters — research suggests you may be overlooking the best candidates.

A recent article from *The New York Times* highlighted the ineffectiveness of unstructured interviews. Based on research from Yale and Carnegie Mellon, the article shared the results of an experiment where evaluators were given access to students' past GPAs and upcoming course loads and asked to predict those students' future GPAs. The predictions from evaluators who did not conduct interviews were more accurate than those who did, suggesting that unstructured interviews may give evaluators inaccurate perceptions of candidates' abilities.

**The value and limitations of teacher interviews**  
If the interview is not a good predictor of job performance, why does it persist? Obviously, it is

a perceived opportunity for the school district to evaluate the candidate. It is also an opportunity for the candidate to evaluate the district. On this latter point, the National Association of Elementary School Principals recognizes an interview also provides a chance to share more about the district. Interviews provide schools and districts the means to build a rapport with candidates, which can be especially important in districts experiencing teacher shortages. K-12 leaders rightfully hold tight to every opportunity to put their best foot forward with each candidate.

Though the value of interviews as a rapport-building opportunity is evident, the ineffectiveness of interviews at predicting performance is troubling.

"Anybody can say anything in an interview," said Sherry Christian, coordinator of human resources at Niagara Catholic District School Board in Ontario. "Personal evaluations are only as good as the evaluator."



We always try to get the right evaluator — someone with experience interviewing candidates — but you can't always trust that's accurate."

Sherry notes that considering a candidate's accomplishments can inform hiring decisions, but when dealing with large candidate pools, sometimes even that's not enough to identify the best of the best.

"Sometimes we have 10 candidates that all have the same credentials — so what defines them? What tells you which one will be a better teacher?" she asked.

Those aren't easy questions to answer — particularly without additional context — which may explain why evaluators in *The New York Times* experiment still preferred to conduct interviews, even after learning that doing so reduced their ability to make accurate predictions.

A variety of cognitive biases likely play into this preference, such as the tendency to find stories in sparse data — including interview interactions — overconfidence in one's ability to glean valuable information from a candidate, and the tendency to want more information even when more isn't better.

### Designing interviews that complement and enhance the hiring process

Adopting more effective interview methods begins by replacing unstructured interview styles, such as those used in the Yale study, with structured interviews — where questions and acceptable answers are specified in advance. Structured interviews provide a more valid indicator of job performance and eliminate hypothetical and general questions, such as "what's your biggest weakness?"

In education hiring, the most effective teachers are those who can tell a specific story about a past experience with a particular research-based element of effective teaching — a characteristic which can be uncovered using behavior-based interviewing (BBI).



BBI is designed around the premise that past behavior is the best predictor of future performance. This interview method uses questions that require much more than a simple yes or no response. They require the candidate to discuss past problems and how they were resolved.

The interviewer assesses responses to see if the candidate has experience with the problem, took appropriate action and learned from the result.

Still, when you have 78 applicants — like Cheryl Stockdale in the comic — knowing effective interview techniques such as BBI isn't enough. How do you prioritize which candidates to interview?

### Data-based screenings empower objective selection of interviewees

Pre-screening and candidate assessment tools can help provide objective insights to narrow candidate pools, and the most effective tools look at more than candidate personality and classroom readiness by applying evidence-based research to assessment questions and results.

For example, a research consortium including the Northwestern Evaluation Association (NWEA), the University of Chicago, and other highly regarded institutions and experts in research, education, psychometrics and predictive analytics, worked with more than 89,000 teachers to understand patterns of teacher characteristics and how they relate to educator effectiveness. They uncovered four domains that indicate which teachers will most likely have the greatest impact on student growth:

1. Teaching skills: whether a teacher has the professional judgement necessary for classroom success.
2. Cognitive ability: how well a teacher applies his or her teaching skills in complex situations.
3. Attitudinal factors: likelihood that a teacher will sustain and persist over time in a school system.
4. Qualifications: a teacher's educational background, academic credentials, teaching positions and career accomplishments.

These findings provided the foundation for the Teacher Educators Professional Inventory (Teacher EPI®) — a first-of-its-kind, data-based teacher candidate assessment tool used by schools across the U.S. and Canada to select interviewees that meet their standards

in each category by matching candidates' answers to 100 questions to school and classroom needs.

This is one innovative way to give school and district leaders an objective analysis of applicants and a prediction of how they'll impact student achievement, which — alongside their own observations and instincts — hiring managers can use to identify best-fit educators.

### Putting it all together to hire top-notch teachers

Robust hiring processes that identify the best teachers available can deliver quality and efficiency at each stage of the hiring process. Research-based candidate assessments are extremely useful tools for converting an overwhelming applicant pool into a ranked list of candidates for interviewing. Structured interviews identify the strongest candidates within that ranking of top performers.

Together, predictive analytics for screening and BBI for final decisions enable school systems to hire high-quality candidates efficiently while maintaining a human touch.

*Nick Montgomery is an education data scientist and entrepreneur who directs the research agenda for TalentEd. Previously he directed UChicago Impact — an organization providing improvement data tools built from high-end research to over 4,000 schools. Nick holds an M.A. in education research from the University of Michigan, and a B.A. in computer science from Brown University.*



*Katy Smith is a Product Leader focused on empowering schools to make data-driven decisions using assessments and analytics technology. Prior to joining TalentEd, she spent six years leading data insights that drive action at various companies. Katy holds a B.A. in economics from Armstrong Atlantic State University.*



# THE AMERICAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION: 130 YEARS OF EDUCATING GLOBAL CITIZENS FOR A CHANGING WORLD



By Nina Blake, American School Foundation A.C., Mexico City.

One hundred and thirty years ago, in August 1888, the mother-in-law of an American oilman named John Davis put up a small ad in the newspaper, with the following message:

*“On the first Monday in August 1 will open a kindergarten for children from 3 to 9 years of age at 2nd Calle de Iturbide No.2, up stairs (sic). A thorough course of kindergarten will be given, as it is taught extensively throughout the United States. Terms, \$5.00 a month. For further information, apply to the above address. Mrs. Bessie Files.”*

This is how the American School Foundation

(ASF) first opened its doors to nine students in downtown Mexico City, setting forth a 130-year legacy of education based on the core values of justice, understanding and truth. If the original founders could see the school now, they would find that the dream they envisioned, of encouraging students to achieve the highest possible standards of intellectual and personal development, based on an academically rigorous, American independent education, lives on to this day.

Besides being the oldest accredited American school abroad which is still in full operation, ASF is now considered one of the leading private schools in the country, thanks to its competitive K-12 educational

programs. Over the years, ASF has achieved something that few others have: a curriculum affiliated with three of the most competitive national and international educational programs. The school is accredited by AdvancED, through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), as well as the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) in the U.S. and is authorized as an IB World School. Additionally, ASF is fully recognized by the Mexican Education Secretariat (SEP, for its acronym in Spanish) and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM, for its acronym in Spanish).

One hundred and thirty years later, ASF has evolved into a comprehensive learning environment, thanks to its ongoing investment and stewardship in state of art classrooms conducive to interactive learning; the finest technology, science laboratories, athletic facilities and an amazing performing arts venue. As part of the school’s mission to develop responsible and

contributing citizens with a global mindset, as of 2009, the school has implemented the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design sustainable building practices on campus. That year, The Upper School and Sheila Rafferty Ahumada Administrative Building remodeling project was completed, integrating the school’s first LEED-certified green building. Two new LEED-certified green buildings followed in 2016, the Ángeles Espinosa Yglesias Fine Arts Center and the Jenkins Foundation Wellness Center, creating resource-efficient facilities for students which use less water and energy and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Both buildings have green roofs.

Of course, it is only natural innovative facilities should house pioneering classes, which is something ASF has always strived for. This is why, the 2017-18 school year is bringing major advancements to the learning experience of American School Foundation students through four new digital initiatives.



Connected Educators is a program aimed at training faculty members in using educational technology for teaching and learning, aimed at keeping students responsible for their own progress, as they take their learning to new levels. In an effort to support teachers-as-learners, ASF will focus professional learning for the 2017-18 school year on transforming learning through a tiered system of training, encompassing innovative strategies for lesson design and delivery. Teachers will receive comprehensive training on iOS devices and programs, while increasing their current knowledge of Google Apps for Education. The goal is to continually create relevant, transformative learning experiences in their classrooms, leveraging the Standardized BYOD model





for all students.

A revised Bring Your Own Device Strategy, clarifies what and how digital devices will be used in the classroom, and assures that everybody will have access to a device. As a progressive learning institution, ASF prioritized the integration of modern tools in all learning processes. This model strengthens initiatives for preparing students for the changing world in which they will succeed.

A New Learning Management System has been acquired to streamline and simplify how students and parents access grades, assignments, and class materials through the ASF website during classes and at home. Thanks to this advancement, teachers now find it easier and quicker to post this information and parents can keep up to date with their children's progress.

Finally, the school has developed a K-12 digital citizenship program named Connected Citizens that covers topics to be delivered throughout ASF that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The program will develop students' skills to be successful in a globalized, connected, and changing world. Students, faculty and community members will be able to create a strong digital portfolio and a responsible digital footprint. The integration of the Common Sense Media standards with the IB model will provide



a framework for the ASF faculty and families to successfully implement the program.

Looking back now, it seems hard to believe how far the American School Foundation has come. Yet even though so many things have undergone a complete transformation, something essential has remained the same: the founders' dream of forming kind, well-rounded students, who are prepared to take on any challenge and ready to give back to the world at large.



*Nina Blake is Communications Coordinator at the American School Foundation in Mexico City. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from the Universidad Iberoamericana. Nina has a wide background as a writer, editor, translator, proofreader and copywriter for global advertising companies where she has created written and creative content for leading brands.*

## Paraprofessionals in the Pipeline to Become Teachers

By Nancy Sharpe Strawbridge, Ed.D., Walton County School District, Monroe, GA

A new partnership is underway in North Georgia to enable working paraprofessionals to complete their degrees in Early Childhood Education and become classroom teachers. This pipeline for paraprofessionals to become teachers, the Early Childhood Degree Completion Program, was envisioned to create support for paraprofessionals with the end result being an increase in the number of exceptionally qualified teachers available to schools. The planning process for this initiative began in the fall of 2015 when representatives of the Walton County School District (Monroe, GA) and the College of Education at Piedmont College (Athens, GA campus) came together to explore the possibilities for working paraprofessionals to pursue and complete their degrees in early childhood education. The program was developed with the knowledge and understanding that outstanding teacher candidates with years of experience working in the classroom are always in demand, that many paraprofessionals have attempted to complete their degrees resulting in an accumulation of college credits, and that older students who are working full-time often face barriers in meeting life's demands. One only needs to visit a local elementary school to see first-hand that paraprofessionals, also known as teacher aides, assistants, para-educators, and colloquially as paras or paraprofessionals, are an important part of meeting students' needs and supporting teachers' work in classrooms, thus having valuable experience when they choose to become certified teachers.

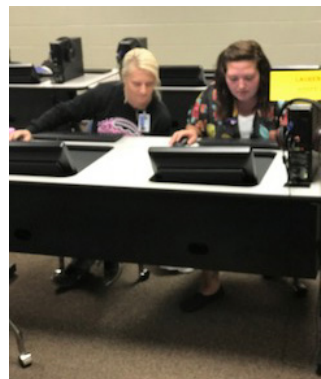




In the initial planning phase for the program, paraprofessionals in the Walton County School District (WCSD) were surveyed to gauge their interest in an opportunity to complete their degree. Following the survey, organizational meetings were planned and recruiting materials were developed. The recruiting materials included brochures about the opportunity with information about meeting times and locations, course listings, the application process, and financial aid. It is important to note that both Piedmont College and the WCSD made significant contributions to the program including the school district providing class meeting and office space and the college providing coordination and an advisor specifically for this program along with a reduction of the usual tuition rate and fees. In addition, the college made the commitment to have most classes taught by full-time faculty as opposed to relying on part-time faculty. With planning and supports in place, additional organizational meetings were planned and paraprofessionals from surrounding school districts and students from a local technical school were invited to participate.



In reflecting on the planning phases of this initiative, some of the obstacles encountered along the way cannot be ignored because they provide insight into the process and serve as cautionary information for those who might wish to replicate this effort. Perhaps the greatest unanticipated obstacle was the wide-ranging coursework, in both academic fields and number of credits successfully completed, that our paraprofessionals' transcripts revealed. Many had attended two or more colleges, others had pursued degree programs that required few of the traditional general education courses required for students in education, and some had coursework that was more than twenty years old. Also, unexpected, several students had completed some of the core classes required in the early childhood program resulting in very small classes during the first semester. Simultaneously with the admissions process, individual advisement sessions were conducted to determine the best path for each participant to complete as many general education requirements as needed, and the initial starting date for the degree program was deferred from August 2016 to August 2017 to give students an opportunity to complete core courses in general education. With college admission and initial advisement completed, classes began for the cohort in August of 2017.



The cohort consists of 13 nontraditional students: eight classroom paraprofessionals, one Media Center paraprofessional, one pre-k coordinator in a daycare setting, one pre-k teacher in a daycare setting and one administrative assistant working in an afterschool program. All of the students are female, nine are White and four are African-American. The students range in age from the mid-twenties to the early fifties. At this writing, the cohort has completed two classes and two additional classes are in progress. The students are on track to be formally admitted to the teacher education program and to graduate in the summer of 2019. Our expectation is not only that they graduate in 2019, but that because of their experience in the classroom, they will be exceptionally well-qualified to step into the role of classroom teacher.

As states from California to Virginia, report shortages in varying teaching fields, finding well-prepared teachers will continue to be crucial to the success of students nationwide. Innovative teacher preparation initiatives, such as the North Georgia partnership between the Walton County School District and Piedmont College, will provide teacher candidates who are not only committed to their communities but also prepared to excel in the classroom.



*Nancy Sharpe Strawbridge, Ed.D., Director of Title IIA Programs, joined the Walton County School District in 1999 and served as an elementary school principal for 12 years. She brings 25 years of experience to her work with teachers and students. She is a graduate of Temple University and Vanderbilt University.*

*Dr. Strawbridge serves as an adjunct professor for Piedmont College teaching courses in School Law, School Finance, and Communication. Dr. Strawbridge also serves as the Coordinator for the Early Childhood Degree Completion Program for the college.*



*Thank you, Sandy Wachter, for your hard work and dedication to AASPA for the last 10 years!*

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Please email [molly@aaspa.org](mailto:molly@aaspa.org) for more information.



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- Any School Administrators involved in recruitment, retention and human capital management

### HOTEL INFORMATION

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Call (912) 233-7722 for Reservations  
Group Rate - \$159/night + tax

**REGISTER AT [WWW.AASPA.ORG/BOOT-CAMP](http://WWW.AASPA.ORG/BOOT-CAMP)**

### PERSPECTIVE

American Association of  
School Personnel Administrators  
11863 W. 112th Street, Suite 100  
Overland Park, KS 66210