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PRESIDENT'S CORNER From the Desk of Dr. Dale Fisher, AASPA President



Saying I'm honored to serve as the AASPA President just doesn't seem like it carries enough weight to truly embody how much pride I have in representing this organization. Without a doubt, AASPA is the leader in K-12 HR professional development, in addition to unwavering support and advocacy for our membership and the students that we serve. I'm proud to be an active member of this growing organization and contributing to the learning that is provided to my colleagues.

We are roughly a month removed from our time together in Orlando for the 84th Annual Conference and I still find myself sharing new ideas with my school district's HR team as we examine and unpack a number of our current practices to try and adopt some of the institutional knowledge that many of you shared with us at the conference. With 780 participants converging in Orlando last month, it was our most well attended conference and it should be no surprise that coordinating an event of this magnitude takes tremendous support. I hope you share my sentiments that the conference was a resounding success. We couldn't do it without the outstanding leadership and support of our AASPA staff members. They never fail to impress me with their commitment to quality, in all facets of their work.

Moreover, the organization couldn't thrive without the time and dedication so many of our volunteers put forth. Have you considered volunteering for AASPA? I remember when I first presented at an Annual Conference and began volunteering on the Constitution and By-Laws Committee. I found these experiences deeply rewarding. Please consider joining a committee, writing an article or a blog and/or submitting a proposal to present at an event. My experiences in these areas led me to my roles on the Executive Board. To that end I'd like to welcome the following members of the 2022-2023 Executive Board; Kevin Walton - President-Elect, Tanisha Holland - Recording Secretary, Vicent Citarelli - Region 3 Representative and Brian Baca - Region 4 Representative. I'm excited about what the Executive Board has in the works over the next year.

Thank you for putting your trust in me to lead this organization. Based on the organization's new strategic plan, I'm excited about the growth AASPA will make over the next few years as we continue to inspire and engage all stakeholders. I look forward to joining with all of you again in October of 2023 for the 85th Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA. If I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

[Click here to start your own journey and get involved with the organization today.](#)

Regards,

Dr. Dale Fisher
AASPA President

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PRINCIPALS CAN MAKE OR BREAK STRATEGIC EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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

Post-pandemic challenges have increased the urgency for an engaged education workforce. Strategic employee engagement has not been a formal priority for many school districts, but districts MUST implement strategic employee engagement practices to ensure that students and teachers receive what they need to be successful. Strategic employee engagement has been shown to decrease absenteeism, reduce turnover and increase student achievement and engagement in schools – a recipe for success!

Employee engagement can be daunting, but districts and schools can control the complexities related to their individual locations. It is, however, important to understand that employee engagement on a strategic level is not a “one and done” type of initiative. It is not a single event or a short-term project. Employee engagement is intentional and ongoing, says Tim Hodges of Gallup.

Hodges goes on to identify five other elements Gallup found in the most engaged schools. The elements include identifying the right people to be school leaders, focusing on the strengths of teachers, ensuring a culture of recognition exists, building a teacher engagement assessment through data and realizing that successful, strategic engagement must be a group effort.

So how does this happen in schools? It begins with an effective principal leading the building. “The quality of the school’s principal is a big determinate of student achievement.” The experiences of ALL students and ALL teachers are impacted by a principal, and the level of this impact should not be underestimated. It is imperative that all districts place effective principals in their buildings; principals who can successfully

engage employees because of their skill or because they skillfully assemble the right team who can. Once principals are in place, their skills in instruction, people and organizations must be applied. Goldring identified that the principal’s job in many cases, has been refocused and reorganized on coaching, feedback and engagement in instruction versus the traditional operations and compliance emphasis. Employee engagement is well aligned to the new structure, but principals must also recognize the need to build their own capacity in these areas if they are to be successful.

Before a principal and leadership team can begin building an employee engagement strategic plan, it is important to know what employees really think. Employee engagement surveys are available from a variety of sources and provide leaders with insights on the current level of engagement in their buildings. It can be nerve-racking to see the results, but they should be viewed as a data set that will set the foundation for moving forward versus a personal criticism. The use of a survey can backfire however, if action is not quickly taken or communicated. If results remain private for too long, trust in the process and people can erode and stop things before they have a chance to start. Analyze and share the information as employees are two times more likely to be engaged if they can see action taken within a timeframe that is recent to survey completion.

Having established effective principal leadership and the importance of knowing the compass of your employees, principals can employ four common practices that lead to successful, strategic implementation of employee engagement structures.

View AASPA Employee Engagement Surveys!

These practices are commonly identified in a number of studies, but it should be noted that an individual principal will have great difficulty being successful in the development, implementation and continued work of employee engagement. Selection of the right building leaders by the principal to compose the employee engagement team is one of the primary tasks for successful implementation of engagement efforts.

An initial common practice for principals is to prioritize interactions to have an instructional focus. Providing feedback to teachers that is useful and coaching that is effective will make a marked difference in both teacher and student performance. Using data to guide decisions and conversations will illustrate the coherency of instruction to performance, and principals who need to increase their instructional capacity should embrace the professional development necessary to be able to provide this to their teachers.

A second common practice of principals is to build a school climate that is productive. Principals must utilize their own intelligence – emotional and social – to focus on an environment that promotes collaboration, trust and engagement with data and the continuous improvement process. The integration of these elements provides employees with the understanding of how things are related to each other as well as the big picture and engages them as individuals to the overall performance of the building and its students.

Collaboration, however, doesn’t happen by accident and the third common practice of the principal related to successful engagement efforts is to facilitate collaboration. Structuring and protecting common planning time for teams (i.e., PLCs) can provide expanded collaboration and connection to the school/district offered professional development. The intentionality of the team structure and collaborative conversations can positively affect the continuous improvement process and increase trust within a building.

Leadership of personnel management with strategy and equity is the fourth common practice for principals. If a principal truly wants the school to make progress in the continuous improvement process with employee engagement, then strategic personnel management can be the difference. Hiring based

on what makes a teacher effective, placing teachers where their strengths match specific student need and strategically making assignments is imperative. This approach improves and enhances collaboration, increases teacher quality for students and has been identified as a contributing factor in reducing teacher turnover.

Leading with equity in personnel management is again, essential for diverse students to be valued, to feel that value and have high expectations. With equity focused practices, there have been positive effects demonstrated in “...closing the achievement and opportunity gaps for historically marginalized groups.” It is critically important for all students to have equal access to the schools’ strongest teachers and leading with strategy and equity will ensure this opportunity exists for all students.

Now more than ever, students deserve engaged teachers, and teachers deserve a culture that fosters, supports and encourages engagement. District leadership must value and invest in employee engagement and building leadership must prioritize strategic employee engagement to support and enhance the achievement and experience of our students and teachers.



Dr. Sara Skretta serves as the Sr. Director of Accreditation, Placement & Licensure and Certification Officer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s College of Education and Human Sciences and is a member of the

Educator Effectiveness Department at the Nebraska Department of Education. She currently serves as the President-Elect of the Nebraska Council of Teacher Education, an advisory board to the State Board of Education and is past-President of the Nebraska Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Dr. Skretta is active in various national educational organizations and started her 20+ year education career as a high school English teacher, coach, administrator and human resources executive before moving to UNL. Dr. Skretta has served as an AASPA committee chair, co-chair and member of three different committees. Her passion and dedication to high quality education and educator preparation is due in part to being the wife of a school administrator and mom to four boys!



CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR IMPROVING TEACHER RETENTION: LESSONS LEARNED IN A LARGE URBAN DISTRICT

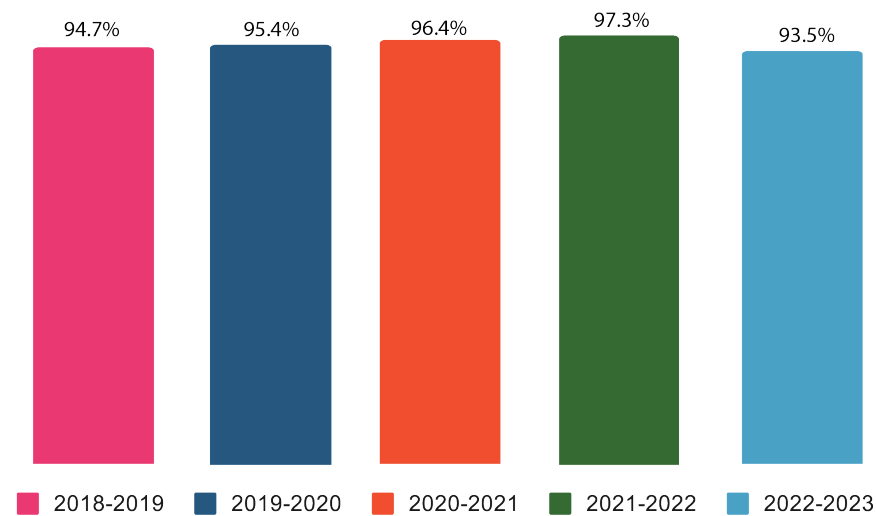


by Dr. Marco A. Muñoz, Employee/Teacher Retention; Jefferson County School District; Louisville, KY

A diverse school system is characterized by having a variety of races and cultures in a context where they are respected and appreciated as well as supported and empowered. This kind of school system sets a foundation on a welcoming mindset that embraces differences in backgrounds and flourishes with ensuring the right conditions for diverse employees to bring their authentic selves to the workplace. A diverse school system prospers on having a variety of cultural talents and experiences, thanks to their students, parents and teachers.

The Jefferson County Public Schools Retention Office is supporting diversity, equity and inclusion with a vision that is about (1) using the improvement science framework, (2) using research-based data analytic and (3) building leadership capacity with quality coaching (principal consultations) across schools to keep our teachers engaged, with high levels of self-efficacy, a sense of belonging and with the goal of retaining quality teachers. This is our employee/teacher retention approach-to-action in a nutshell and, more important, we are seeing some general positive results as shown in the graph that appears to the right.

JCPS Teacher Retention



In this article, we will (1) analyze the changing demographics for both students and teachers, (2) reaffirm the undeniable value of educators of color and (3) provide guidance on important factors associated with retention of teachers of color in JCPS.

1. Changes in Demographics—Students and Teachers of Color are Growing

According to the Kentucky School Report Card, back in 2011-12, showed that we had 49,106 (or 51.7%) White students in JCPS. Three years later, by 2014-15, the Kentucky School Report Card showed that we were a student of color-majority school system, with 50,140 (or 52.2%) students of color in JCPS; at that point in time, Black, Latinx and Asian student membership grew to 48.6% of the total student population in our school district. The latest Kentucky School Report Card available at the time of this article (school year 2020-21) showed that students of color represent over 60% of the total student population in JCPS

A JCPS student group that enriches our school system and shows a remarkable increase is the English as a Second Language (ESL) student population.

According to our JCPS Data Books from 2016-17, the ESL population was 5,986 students; fast forward to the school year 2020-21 Data Books and it can be

found that we now have 11,121 ESL students in JCPS. This means an 86% growth in our diversity associated with our amazing ESL/English Language Learners.

Teachers of color are also growing in our school system. For example, back in school year 2014-15, the Kentucky School Report Card showed only 958 teachers of color; however, by school year 2020-21, the Kentucky School Report Card showed 1,020 teachers of color in JCPS which is a 7% increase. Although closing the historical staffing diversity gap between students and teachers is a long-term process, what is promising is the number of newly hired and retained teachers of color in JCPS. For example, from the 558 new teachers hired for school year 2021-22, 120 (or 21.5%) were teachers of color. Furthermore, 108 out of the 120 (or 90%) teachers of color have been successfully retained in JCPS as assessed in

mid-August 2022 which is a meaningful and positive percentage due to the Great Resignation across the nation's schools.

2. The Undeniable Value of Educators of Color

Current research has shown the benefits from a diverse teaching workforce, with especially large gains for Black students who are taught by Black teachers. For low-income Black boys, their on-time high school graduation rate climbs by nearly 40%.

Having Black or Brown skin doesn't magically make a better teacher—I know that by first-hand experience when teaching for many years in adult education, K-12 and higher education. However, there's something about living in a Black or Brown skin that gives you a different set of experiences, background knowledge and expectations for your students of color. For example, based on the lived experience that comes with being a person of color, teachers are more likely to deconstruct the racial/cultural biases present in society; in this sense, making it more likely that classroom discussions include a social justice

When Black students have at least one Black teacher by 3rd grade, they are 13% more likely to enroll in college.

With two Black teachers, they are 32% more likely to go to college.

orientation. Another example is that if teachers instill high expectations and INSPIRE their students of color, these students will be more likely to believe they can grow up to be a successful professional teacher; in fact, thinking about the possibilities of

making a real difference in students' lives is the catalyst people of color entering and remaining in the teaching profession. A sense of purpose coupled with the right school climate conditions will allow teachers of color to flourish and stay in the profession.

3. Conditions that Help Retain Teachers of Color

Current research argues that working conditions matter for all educators if we want to have a chance to retain them in the teaching profession. Furthermore, researchers found that Black teachers reported the lowest satisfaction with the domains of Compensation and Career Path, Cultural Competence, Diversity and Work/Life Balance.

In JCPS, we value the teacher voice and that is the reason why we collect data from teachers on a regular basis so that it can inform action. Working with

Teach Upbeat and based on a sample of 1,329 teachers, teachers reported the highest satisfaction (i.e., percent agreement) with the domains of Equity (89%), Care and Commitment (86%), Cultural Competence (84%), Self-Efficacy (84%), Inclusion (83%), Evaluation (83%) and Collaboration (83%). Based on an analysis of JCPS Black teachers, it was noted the highest satisfaction with the domains of Equity (83% agreement), Care/Commitment (84%), Cultural Competence (76%), Self-Efficacy (86%), Inclusion (79%), Evaluation (84%) and Collaboration (80%).

Equally important, it was found through the survey that Black teachers reported the lowest satisfaction with the following domains: Diversity (61%), School Safety and Order (62%), Compensation/Career Path (62%), Teacher Voice/Leadership (68%) and Work/Life Balance (69%). This is an agenda for targeted improvements in the next quinquennial in JCPS. We will keep supporting our schools in all these important domains in the next two school years as we know that data without actions will not help us achieve our goal of improving the satisfaction of our Black teachers.

According to the classic organizational theorist Frederick Herzberg (1969), employee satisfaction can be understood as a two-factor theory: “hygiene” and “motivation” factors. Hygiene factors, such as salary and benefits, decrease employees’ dissatisfaction with the work environment. Motivator factors, such as recognition and leadership opportunities, increase employees’ job satisfaction; as result, motivator factors make workers more productive, creative and committed. It is important to recognize the value of both factors, particularly if we want to contextualize this theory in the framework of a total reward system.



Black teachers are providing useful guidance for all of us and at all levels of the educational system. Framing their valuable and actionable feedback within the context of Herzberg’s classic theory of employee satisfaction (1969):

Black teachers want to continue seeing more diversity in the context of school safety/order and adequate compensation/career path (hygiene factors) WHILE having more teacher voice/leadership and maintaining a healthy work/life balance (motivation factors).

This is a viable theory of action that allows for self-growth and self-actualization. We all need to pitch in to make this a reality—no matter the role or function we play in our school district. This is a call to action.

While preventing job dissatisfaction by working on diversity, school safety/order and compensation/career path (i.e., hygiene factors), administrators at all levels of the system need to increase job satisfaction by creating more opportunities for teacher voice/leadership as well as promoting a healthy work/life balance (i.e., motivation factors) for ALL teachers. In fact, if we want to continue experiencing success in retaining our teachers of color, this recommendation for action might be more important than ever—let’s listen to the voice of our educators of color, let’s grow more diverse leaders by providing professional development and opening career pathways and let’s exercise self-care so that we can continue to make a positive difference with those around us for the long-term.

We are thankful for the leadership of our school-based leaders in JCPS as they care about promoting the diversification of our workforce AND collaborate with us in HR Employee Retention in the retention of teachers of color. We are also grateful for our Assistant Superintendents for Accelerated Improvement Schools, Elementary Schools, Middle Schools and High Schools; Diversity, Equity and Poverty (DEP); Curriculum and Instruction (Professional Development & Learning); Financial Services/Grants & Awards; Research; Exceptional Child Education (ECE), English as a Second Language (ESL) and School Climate and Culture. This is just to name a few of the JCPS internal partners we collaborate with on a regular basis.

We have a sense of mission in our retention work in JCPS. Some guiding principles are evident. One of them is collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. To be successful, this work of engaging and retaining teachers of color requires that “the whole village” gets involved in system thinking and systematic action!



Dr. Marco A. Muñoz has over two decades of experience in educational administration and research. He is currently serving in Human Resources in the area of employee retention with the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) and applying the Improvement Science in talent management and teacher engagement work. In JCPS, he previously served for several years as Director of Priority Schools and over a decade as an Evaluation Specialist for institutional research (including large-scale federal grants). Recipient of the 2015 Harvard University Strategic Data Project Fellowship on teacher effectiveness and the 2008 National Staff Development Council Best Evaluation Award on professional development, Dr. Muñoz is the author of numerous publications in refereed journals, including the area of human resources.

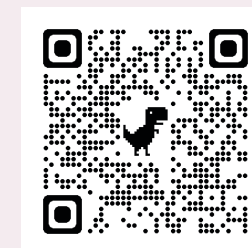
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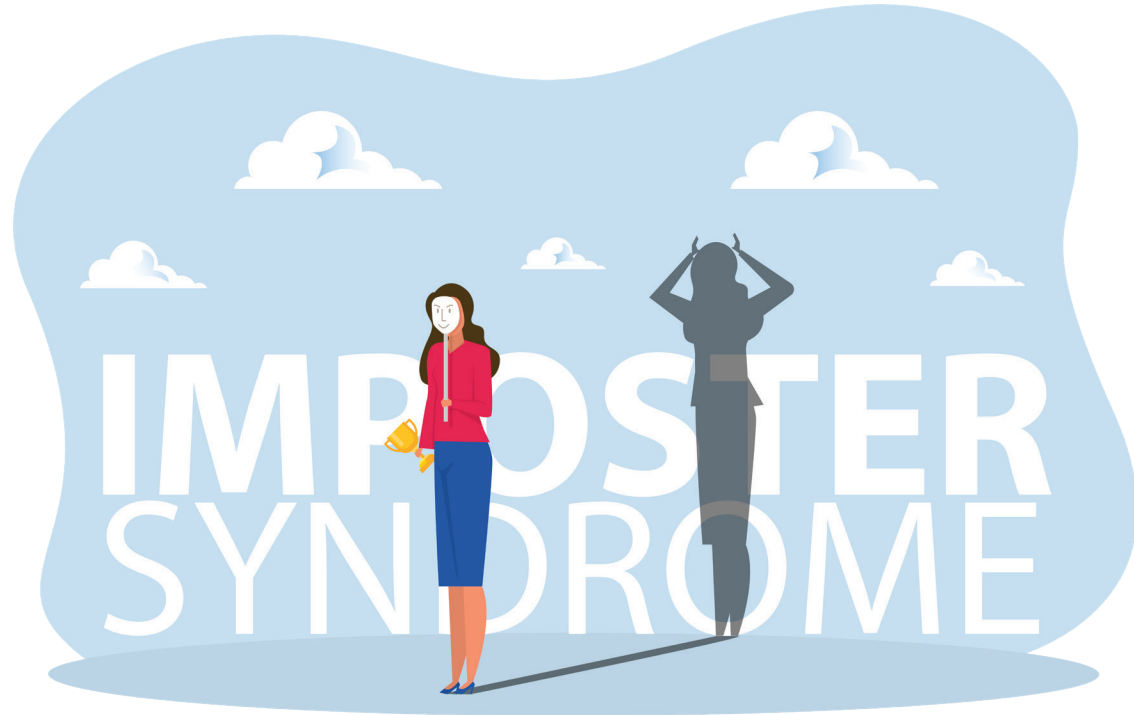
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by Dr. Monica Schroeder, Deputy Superintendent;
North Shore School District 112; Highland Park, IL

Impostor syndrome. These aren't words that people who know me would associate with someone who has taken on a variety of leadership roles in her career. However, I have struggled with this issue for years. Let me take you back in time to when I first started as a school administrator to illustrate the point.



I began my administrative career in 2006 as a middle school associate principal. I was 28 years old, with six years of teaching experience and an intense drive to serve others. The school district had an all-time high number of retirees the year I started, which made the age difference between me and 15% of the staff about 30 years. As a result, I was so nervous about being successful in my new role: What would people think of this new, young, female administrator who would now be evaluating and supervising many soon-to-be retirees?

I decided to control what I could control by dressing the part by trying to appear to be older. I figured that I had a better chance of people not being disappointed that they hired me with little leadership experience, if I at least appeared closer to their age. So, I did what any young professional would do who didn't have a lot of money in her bank account. I asked my mother-in-law for help. Luckily, she had just retired as a superintendent, and was no longer in need of her old suits. Yep, this 28 year-old was wearing the same suit her 57 year old mother-in-law wore just a couple of months before. I bought the most conservative, fashionable shoes I could find in several shades to match the long suit coats that hit above my knees and pants that I wore on a daily basis for the first six months on the job. I know, this way of thinking is ridiculous, but I was terrified of the staff finding out that the district had just hired a 28 year-old, who barely knew what she was doing, to lead them. This decision to go full impostor was even reinforced by compliments on my attire I received from some of the experienced staff.

However, young though I was, I knew there was a job to do and that clothes alone were not going to be the reason for succeeding. During those first six months, I worked long hours because I took to heart the notion of the three "Ps:" People first. Paper second. And Personal third. I spent the days building relationships with staff, students and parents through working collaboratively, attending meetings and events and making phone calls home. I'd spend afterschool through evening hours catching up on emails, reviewing reports and preparing for upcoming meetings and professional development days.

As a result of all that hard work and strategic effort, within my first six months I formed effective relationships with staff, students and parents. Also, I gradually awoke to the notion that it wasn't clothes or affectations that formed those relationships, it was me, my values, my work ethic and my love of the role. No longer needing to be an impostor, I said goodbye to superintendent suits and hello to my fashion style. More importantly, the confidence I gained from these relationships provided me with the comfort to slowly show my age by being vulnerable, sharing my feelings more openly, supporting others as they struggled to navigate all that teaching entails and laughing together at the mistakes we all make along the way.

I share this story with all of you because, if you see me now, you wouldn't know that I have struggled with impostor syndrome. More importantly, you wouldn't know that before I present to a large crowd, speak in front of a camera, or meet new people who have seen me on social media, impostor syndrome creeps in from time to time. I must remind myself of the old suits I used to wear when I begin to worry that I'm going to disappoint someone. The suits aren't what made me successful in my role, they were and still are the skills that I possess which have gotten me this far in life.



For those who struggle with impostor syndrome, I see you and understand you. The greatest inhibitor of progress is our own mindset. I have learned through reading books by author Shawn Achor that it takes practice to train your brain to think more positively. I've also learned through the years that the worst part of not trying something new for fear of failure is missing out on the opportunity altogether. Recognizing this, I put myself in situations now where I may be uncomfortable and I may fail, but I work through it by letting go of perfectionism and in the end I'm relieved that I did. I urge you to fight through the feelings of not being enough. You are and always will be enough. I'm here in your corner, cheering you on as you navigate new experiences.



Dr. Monica Schroeder is the Deputy Superintendent of North Shore School District 112 in Highland Park, Illinois. She is also the President of the Illinois School Personnel Administrator Association and the Region 2 Representative for AASPA. Monica is active on Twitter via @mschroeder6.



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STRATEGIC STAFFING IN K-12 SCHOOLS: THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN CENTRAL OFFICE

by Dr. Steve Grubb, Chief Talent Officer;
Highline School District; Burien, WA

I remember a comment made to me by my mentor when apprenticing in HR. He said, “Steve if you want a friend in this business, then get yourself a dog.”

As it has turned out, over my career in human resources administration, the people with whom I have worked have contributed to some of the most satisfying professional relationships of my career. However, when it comes to keeping secrets – my dog is perhaps my best friend.

One of the best kept secrets (you can ask my dog, but he won't tell) in K-12 education is the capacity latent within the human resources function – to strategically staff schools. Specifically: 1) to create the conditions to hire educators who align to the teaching and leadership profiles of the district; and 2) assign those educators in a manner that most strategically impacts student learning in equitable ways.

Unfortunately, this is not what central offices or HR departments were set up to do. Central offices were formed in the industrial era and largely follow the manufacturing assumptions of specializing work, monitoring funding streams and ensuring compliance with rules (see the work of Meredith Honig). Entire central office departments were created in the 1960's and 70's to allocate federal funds: Title 1 and special education are prime examples. Human resources is no exception, and is frequently charged with managing functions related to its central office cousins: FMLA, ADA and other aspects of labor law. Surely, these are appropriate functions of central office HR; however, these functions alone have tenuous connection to improved outcomes for students.

In many cases, schools are left to their own devices when it comes to hiring of school staff. It is common for a school to wait for identified vacancies, endure complex and time-consuming processes of budgetary approval, only then post positions, interview and ultimately place a recommendation to hire. There is another way.

School districts are large employers, even in small towns they are often among the largest employer in the community. It is possible for school systems to use their size to project vacancies based upon historical turnover data and in many cases, hire before specific vacancies are identified. The most obvious objection to this type of projection-based hiring is the apparent loss to community/stakeholder input into school-based hiring (sometimes these processes are hardwired into collective bargaining agreements). In addition, fiscal administrators may object to risky costs if projections prove inaccurate. However, with attention to local context, these perceived barriers can often be worked through by generating pools of high-quality candidates from which schools can select.

Staffing schools in a strategic manner requires collaboration with the teaching and learning unit within the central office: this may be easier said than done. Central offices are not structured to foster this kind of collaboration and tend by their very nature to organize work into silos of specialization. Strategic staffing hinges upon collaboration with other departments by hiring to a specific profile, a profile of what high quality teaching look like. In addition, hiring of principals and other school leaders requires a shared understanding of instructional leadership

that can lead to a leadership profile for the district. The teaching and learning function in the district should play a lead role in the development of these profiles and HR must collaborate with teaching and learning leaders to develop recruitment and hiring processes that are responsive to such profiles.

Human Resources departments in central offices are uniquely situated to profoundly impact learning outcomes for students; but to do so HR leaders must ensure the functions of HR go beyond monitoring and compliance and authentically engage with leadership in teaching and learning functions. This will ensure the teachers and leaders who directly serve students are aligned to the teaching and leadership profiles of their district: profiles that reflect powerful commitments to teaching quality and equity.



Steve Grubb serves as Chief Talent Officer in the Highline School District, adjacent to Seattle. With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Steve led the effort to restructure a human resources department with greater focus on recruiting teachers and administrators of color. Steve has also served as a teacher, principal, and school supervisor. His doctorate in education is from the University of Washington.

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HAPPY PEOPLE GUARANTEED: 5 WAYS TO KEEP OUR STAFF SUPER SATISFIED

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

Staff satisfaction is a critical component of the success of any school district. When our employees are pleased, they are productive and efficient. On the other hand, when employees are unhappy, it can lead to decreased productivity and even costly lawsuits. Therefore, to enhance the employee experience in our districts, we must first understand what drives employee satisfaction. If you're looking for ways to improve employee experience in your school district, consider evaluating your culture, investing in professional learning, empowering your employees, encouraging ownership, promoting a positive environment and seeking feedback. These simple steps can create a more satisfying work experience for all.

Assess

According to a study by Gallup, only 36% of employees feel engaged at work. Furthermore, another survey found that 69% of workers would leave their jobs for one that showed they were more appreciated. This data tells us that to improve employee experience, and we need to evaluate our company culture and ensure that employees feel valued and respected. Above all, we need to treat our employees like respectable human beings. Sometimes, we will not agree; on the other hand, they have to know that we care about them. Even during the most challenging times, we always have their best interests in mind.

Invest

Please take a moment to think about this: When one employee improves, we all improve. In short, this means that, in many ways, we are all interconnected with one another. Giving our certified and classified employees the same amount of professional learning opportunities is crucial to supporting all staff members. On-job training helps employees develop new skills and knowledge and gives them a sense of growth and development. These learning opportunities can be crucial for retention, as employees are likelier to stay with an organization that invests in their development. Training employees support our school districts in three ways:

- It allows employees to develop new skills and knowledge that can be applied on the job.
- It provides employees with essential skills that support higher levels of job performance.
- Training helps employees better understand the company culture and how they fit into the larger picture. When employees are well-trained and understand their role within the organization, they are more effective, and great things can happen!

Empower

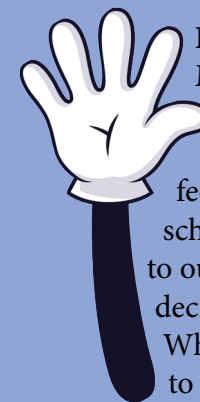
By investing in learning opportunities, you are aiding your employees to grow their knowledge base, ultimately leading to higher employee



engagement. Attention to job training increases our staff's skillset, which empowers them! In addition, this level of autonomy helps our employees feel like they are one with their organization. When our team feels they are being heard, treated fairly and have some control over their work, they will likely be more involved and happy with their job. One of the best ways to do this is not to micromanage your staff. Yes, as leaders, we are supposed to have clear expectations, but once those expectations have been established, take a step back and allow your team to create great work.

Promote

In a thriving workplace culture, we foster an atmosphere that creates an inclusive space for everyone to do their best. This sort of climate begins with leadership. The leaders in your organization should be devoted to making an encouraging work environment by building dependable relationships with their staff, offering support when needed and celebrating victories together. In addition to ensuring that leaders adopt the right behaviors, providing training and tools to support employees is essential. Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, providing learning opportunities and encouraging open communication between leaders and employees are lovely methods for creating enjoyable work environments. By making these work conditions, you are more likely to maintain passionate workers who want to stay with your school district long-term.



Feedback

Most of us are very comfortable giving feedback to others. But, on the other hand, how do you handle when the feedback is about you? As leaders of our school districts, we have to be willing to listen to our staff's feedback about our leadership, decision-making and day-to-day operations. When the administration is open-minded to employee feedback and makes changes based on it, it shows that our district values its employees and is interested in their well-being. While sometimes challenging, seeking feedback can create a positive climate and increase employee satisfaction.

Whether this means conducting periodic surveys or having authentic conversations, getting input from our team can help us identify areas for improvement. Thus enact changes that will benefit all employees.

Where Do You Start?

We must invest in our employees to have a thriving workplace culture. This investment means providing them with the necessary tools and training to succeed and creating a positive work environment that helps your staff thrive. When we do these things, we are more likely to maintain passionate workers who want to stay with our school district long-term. So, where do you start? The most important thing is to be aware of the need for a positive employee experience and commit to change. Next, leaders must set an example by exhibiting the right behaviors and empowering employees. In addition, workplace culture must be promoted through initiatives such as diversity, equity and inclusion programs. Finally, seeking feedback is essential to identify areas for improvement. If you can commit to these things, your school district will be on its way to creating an enjoyable work environment for all employees, and who does not want that?



Dr. Rodney Lewis has served the City of St. Charles School District for three years as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Before moving to HR, Dr. Lewis was a principal for six-

years in the Rockwood School District and the Ferguson-Florissant School District. Currently, he is starting his first year as President of MOASPA-STL as well as the MOASPA Board of Directors, where he will continue its goal of growing, developing and supporting Human Resource personnel across the St. Louis region.



HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR SCHOOL BOARD TO ADDRESS TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES

by Caryn Shaw, Associate;
Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates; Schaumburg, IL

With the challenges school personnel administrators encounter today with hiring and retaining teachers, especially teachers of color, personnel administrators and superintendents need to work collaboratively with their school boards to focus on different methods of hiring and retaining teaching staff. School boards are responsible for approving school district hires, resignations and retirements. Historically, these approvals have been somewhat routine without much concern and without school boards requiring any additional input into recruitment and hiring practices. However, recruitment and retention efforts and costs have changed in today's environment. Therefore, communicating and explaining the new circumstances to school boards and the school community is crucial to maintaining a solid and positive teaching staff.

The pipeline of teachers is rapidly decreasing. New teachers are not as easy to find and attract as in the past. Since 2010, total enrollment nationwide in university teacher preparation programs has declined by more than one-third. Nearly every state has experienced declining enrollment in teacher preparation, with some states experiencing declines of more than 50%.

Attracting new hires has always been a goal in other industries. However, actively recruiting teachers in public education has not been a common practice for districts, especially for higher-achieving districts. These districts typically could pay lower starting

salaries, not aggressively recruit and still maintain a solid pool of teacher candidates. However, today's prospective teachers know that they are in demand and they too will be looking for more than a district's reputation when choosing to apply for a position. They will seek a higher salary as well as mentoring and onboarding opportunities to build new skills critical to their roles. They will also be assessing professional development opportunities and pathways to leadership positions. Due to this new teacher shortage problem, it is now necessary for school leaders to spend more time and money on recruiting, developing and hiring new teachers.

Discussions regarding staffing typically happen during the school budget process. However, due to these new challenges, these talks should happen at the board level long before budget creation begins. Whether your district has these conversations in personnel committees, in executive/closed sessions or your Superintendent discusses this with board leadership, it is essential to lay the groundwork early on regarding the hiring needs. There are many ways for personnel administrators and the Superintendent to have these talks with their board.

When I was a board member, our school district formed an Ad Hoc committee of our Board called Exploring Race and Racism in our schools. One of the subcommittees of this larger committee was specifically around hiring and retaining teachers and

staff of color.

All around the country, school boards are being asked, "What are you doing about hiring teachers of color?" As part of our Ad Hoc committee, we had these discussions among board members, the Superintendent, the Director of HR, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, staff, administration, teachers, community members and most importantly, students. These open conversations allowed our staff to communicate to the board and the community what challenges they face, both with hiring in general and specifically hiring teachers of color. This dialogue helped raise awareness of teacher shortages across the country. Some of the suggestions included modernizing the district's way of thinking about recruiting teachers. The solutions for developing ways to hire and retain teachers became a collaborative undertaking on everyone's part. They included creating specific strategies to recruit and support candidates from diverse backgrounds. At budget time, everyone understood why more money and resources were allocated for these HR areas and buy-in had already been established.

In addition to supporting hiring and recruiting efforts, board members can help in other ways regarding hiring too. For example, board members often have relationships with local universities from professional connections or as university alumni. Board members can introduce key administrators in colleges and universities to their district's administration to discuss partnerships. Possible partnerships include student teaching programs, discounted graduate-level degrees or professional development courses for a district's teachers, or the creation of a pipeline of newly graduated teachers. Adopting partnership programs to build robust educator pipelines has become a vital strategy for student success. For example, many districts across the country create partnerships with universities to implement a Grow Your Own (GYO) program to inspire local students, particularly students of color, to enter the teaching profession. The strategy behind GYO programs is to recruit local students with the expectation they stay in their home communities.

In addition to hiring, retention is vital too. To retain highly sought employees, schools need to foster positive workplace cultures, compensate staff at competitive levels and develop opportunities for professional growth.

To achieve greater efficiency and better outcomes, school district administration and school boards need to prioritize recruiting, invest in professional growth opportunities, create inclusive, supportive environments to retain staff and build positive workplace cultures. As personnel/HR departments struggle to find and keep quality and reliable hires, now more than ever, they need the board to support their efforts. There are numerous ways for school boards, personnel administrators and superintendents to collaborate to tackle this challenge of hiring high-quality teachers to serve our future students. It begins with a positive, open and trusting relationship between the school personnel administrators, superintendent and board members and a collaborative working relationship during the budget process and throughout the year.



Caryn Shaw is an Associate for Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates. She is passionate about providing the best educational experiences for today's and tomorrow's students. She is a former school board president and board member. She is experienced in K-12 education oversight and brings a board member's perspective to her work at HYA. With her business background coupled with her last 20 years in board leadership roles in non-profit organizations, she provides a unique perspective on board relations and board governance. Caryn is always looking for innovative ways for schools to be more efficient and productive. Caryn has a BA in Creative Writing and Literature from the State University of New York at Binghamton and an MBA in Marketing and Management from Hofstra University.



HOW TO SETUP MENTORING PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT DEI

by Dr. Aleka Calsoyas, Co-Founder;
Torace; Oakland, CA

Human Resources (HR) leaders know that a good mentor can transform a career. But though in theory, anyone can find a mentor, not everyone has equal access to people who can fulfill that role. A deliberate approach to creating mentoring programs—even very simple ones—can help increase the number of opportunities for connections and distribute them more equitably.

Many HR directors encourage staff to enter into mentoring relationships. However, encouraging these relationships without providing structured opportunities to engage in them can actually perpetuate disparities in access. Let's look at how this can happen and what can be done to help correct it.

There are numerous ways that new teachers can find a mentor. It can be helpful to think of them on a spectrum from organic to institutionally structured because it allows us to see more clearly the ways in which administrators can and should increase access to these opportunities.

Organic Mentoring

Organic mentoring relationships are driven by individuals' initiative. For instance, many people find a mentor through first- or second-degree connections in their networks just by connecting with others. These connections can be made by chance, or someone can actively seek out support.

For instance, a mentor can be found in:

- Friends and family
- A former teacher, instructor, administrator, etc.
- Someone in your alumni network
- A colleague you worked with in the past
- A connection through a professional organization or association
- Social networks
- Acquaintances from other communities of interest

Institutionally Structured Mentoring

Institutions can actively support the development of mentoring relationships through a variety of programming. People can develop and maintain relationships with mentors that have been assigned through formal programs such as:

- Host teacher for a practicum placement
- Host teacher for the student teacher placement
- Assigned novice mentor (first two years)
- Coach or other assigned central office support staff

Additionally, there are other ways that institutions can support mentoring beyond these traditional examples that can help create more access and promote equity.

Shawn and Alex: A Hypothetical Example of Disparities in Access

Let's take the example of two teachers both in their

third year of teaching. We will call them Shawn and Alex. You can easily run this thought experiment for novice teachers or for veteran teachers considering becoming a school leader.

Shawn is an extrovert. Coming from a family of educators, Shawn always wanted to be a teacher, attended a large university and majored in education. They got their elementary credential from a credentialing program that places 75 candidates in five districts annually. Shawn currently teaches 4th grade in a school with a lot of experienced teachers.

Alex is an introvert. First in their family to attend college, they attended a small college majoring in math in another state and got their credential from an equally small, local prep program. Alex teaches the upper-level math class in a high school that has typically been hard to staff and has a high percentage of novice teachers. Only one teacher in the math department has more experience than Alex and that teacher is stressed and struggling.

If we think through these examples while keeping Shawn and Alex in mind, it is clear that Shawn will have many more opportunities to find a mentor organically than Alex will. Not only does Shawn have a larger network (friends, family, classmates, alumni network) there are also more 4th-grade teachers in the district than high school math teachers. Moreover, as an extrovert, Shawn thrives on chatting with numerous people, whereas Alex really needs quiet time to recharge from a day in the classroom with over 100 different students.

This doesn't mean that Alex can't find a mentor or that Shawn definitely will; however, we can see that they won't have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Use Structure to Increase Access and Promote Equity

There are often opportunities to improve existing mentoring programs to accomplish this.

1. Expand the pools of available, qualified mentors

Many programs ask the same small group of mentors to serve year after year. If mentors are extensively trained and screened, returning to the same folks year after year can appear to reduce costs and ensure that the mentors will be high quality; however, often the main obstacle to increasing the pool is logistical. It can be challenging to get the word out, get mentors approved by their school leaders and organize them into appropriate pools for matching. But the benefits of a deeper pool are numerous:

- With a good matching mechanism and a deeper pool, you are more likely to make good matches between a mentee's needs and a mentor's expertise
- If not matched formally in every instance, each mentor is more likely to have time to continue a relationship with their mentees once the formal mentoring is completed
- Offers more opportunities to grow good mentors who can also be available for "organic" matches

2. Gather more information about what mentors have to offer and what mentees are seeking

- Look at grade levels and subject areas
- Connect people based on curriculum and instructional approaches
- Understand particular strengths and growth areas

3. Provide basic materials that can help set up mentors and mentees for success. This can be "training", but can also be done effectively with limited resources.

- Clear expectations for frequency, format, etc. for in-person or virtual meetings
- Suggested prework, conversation prompts or guidelines for sessions

There are also opportunities to build new programming that can expand opportunities to mentor and be mentored.

1. Extend Opportunities to More People

Connect people who are interested in mentoring who aren't eligible for existing programs. For instance, Shawn and Alex as proficient 3rd-year teachers won't be part of most novice programming and don't require remediation, but may still really benefit from additional support.

2. Create More Opportunities for Connections

Light-touch, short-term mentoring programs or "micro-mentoring" can focus on a particular skill, subject area, etc. and last anywhere from one to three sessions. These have many benefits:

- Participating in several of these may create a lasting mentoring relationship between one of the pairs.
- They establish connections across sites, grade levels, etc. and build community and increase the chances for everyone to make second-degree connections even those not directly participating in the program.
- Sharing knowledge across sites is often more challenging and these connections can help accelerate the spread of innovative ideas and best practices.
- Focused programs can help bring attention to district priorities (for instance, mentoring focused on new technology, on SEL or on restorative justice).
- Focused topics can open up the opportunity for people with specific training and expertise to be mentors and leverage their skills and gain leadership experience, even if they are not ready to host a student teacher or mentor a struggling novice.

The size, strength and depth of an individual's professional network can depend on many factors outside of their control. Approaches to organic mentoring that focus on encouraging individuals to reach out, network, etc. can further entrench structural inequity rather than remedy it. Let's just imagine that we strongly encourage Shawn and Alex to network and find a mentor. With this encouragement, Alex will put in a lot of effort to become a little more connected, but Shawn, the already well-connected person, will more effortlessly become a lot more connected, increasing the size of the opportunity gap between the two rather than narrowing it. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't encourage people to reach out, but rather that it is imperative as administrators we provide structures to support those who need them so that those gaps shrink rather than widen.



Dr. Aleka Calsoyas is the co-founder of Torace, a mentorship platform for educators. She has over 13 years of experience working in Strategic Human Capital for districts, charters and state departments. She comes from a family of educators and previously taught ELA and STEM in programs with students from pre-k to graduate level.



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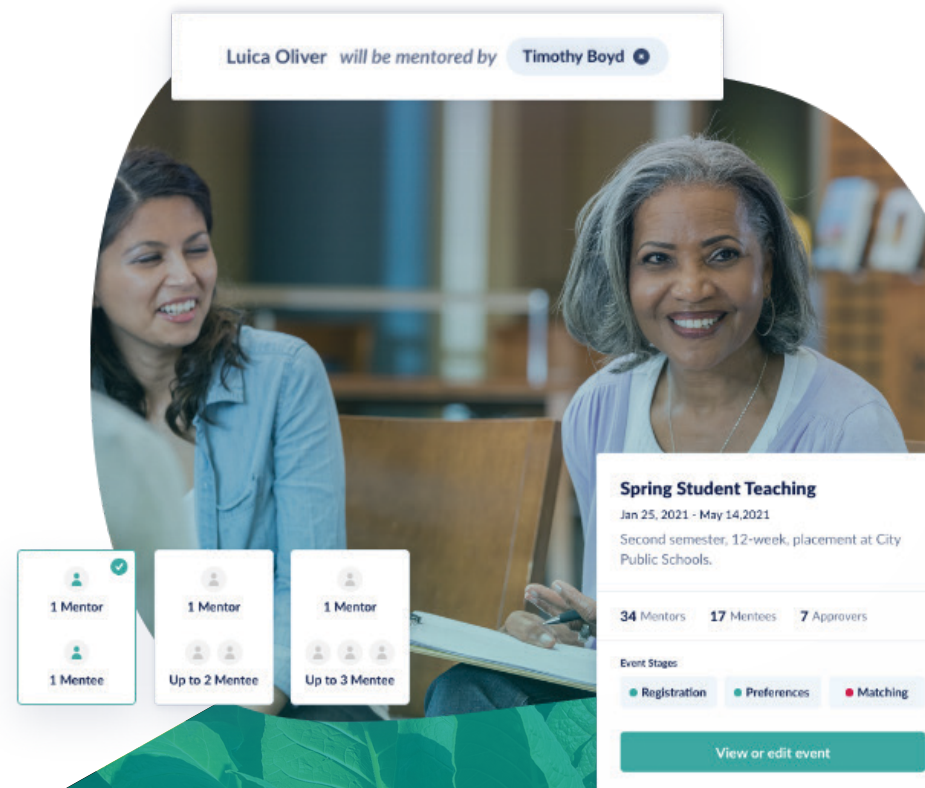
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ANNOUNCING THE EXECUTIVE LEADER IN EDUCATION CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

If you joined us in Orlando last month for our annual conference, you may have heard our exciting announcement—we are launching the new Executive Human Capital Leader in Education (eHCLE) certification program! We are thrilled to introduce this professional development opportunity for accomplished human capital leaders serving in education organizations. The executive-level program builds on the existing Professional Human Capital Leader in Education (pHCLE) certification to offer an advanced pathway for learning and growth.

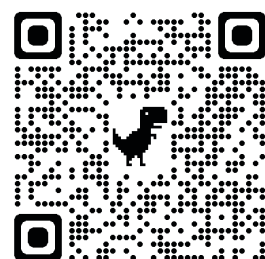
The eHCLE certification process is a ten-month, cohort-based model that culminates in the completion of an independent research project that contributes to the field. The eHCLE pilot program will take place from February–December 2023. During that time, participants will attend 10 virtual convenings, design and execute their research project, provide feedback on peers’ projects and deliver a final presentation virtually or at the AASPA Human Capital Leadership Summit. The time commitment for participants will be about 70 hours.

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Have an active AASPA membership
- Be a current pHCLE holder who has been certified for a full three-year cycle
- Have extensive experience in human capital leadership.

Up to 25 people will be selected for the 2023 cohort. The cost to participate is \$3,000, which includes registration for the Human Capital Leadership Summit (normally \$375 early bird for AASPA members).

Use the QR code below or this link to visit the HCLE certification page on our website, where you can learn more about eHCLE and apply for the pilot cohort. There you can also learn about pHCLE certification and recertification options. Applications for the 2023 eHCLE cohort are due by December 15th.



REGISTER NOW! NATIONAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGE SUMMIT



The National Educator Shortage Summit is an interactive event that convenes focused groups of PK-12 and higher education stakeholders to address the challenges of the national shortage of educators and the educator pipeline to share ways to replicate practices via a national strategy. Central to this conversation will be the use of data and collaboration in sharing promising practices. Above all we hope this Summit will start comprehensive conversations among these groups in the education community and serve as a place where they can pool different perspectives. The event will take place at the New Orleans Marriott Warehouse Arts District Hotel, but you can also stay at the Courtyard New Orleans Warehouse Arts District.

YOUR AGENDA WILL INCLUDE:

- Interactive discussions about barriers, challenges, successes, recruitment and retention strategies
- Presentations from national data collectors and strategists
- Recruitment and retention discussions
- Action planning for solutions

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CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Celebrating Our Superheroes | Orlando, FL

In October of 2022, AASPA set out to Celebrate Our Superheroes, as we provided our members with a week of quality professional development, networking opportunities and entertainment. What resulted was the AASPA 84th Annual Conference in Orlando, FL - a four-day event that attracted school personnel administrators from all around the country. The conference was a huge success, drawing 780 attendees with more than 60 exhibit booths, 12 pre-conference sessions and 90 clinic/ignite sessions.

2022-2023 Executive Board



2022-2023 Election Results:
 President-Elect: Kevin Walton
 Secretary: Tanisha Holland
 Region 3 Representative: Dr. Vincent Citarelli
 Region 4 Representative: Brian Baca

2022-2023 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 5 Representative and Region 6 Representative.

Special Recognition Awards were presented to outgoing board members Kevin Walton, Region 3 Representative, David Robertson, Region 4 Representative and Past President, Dr. Cathy Donovan.

The gavel was passed from 2021-2022 President, Brian White, to 2022-2023 President, Dr. Dale Fisher.

The 2022-2023 budget was approved.

AASPA would like to honor its 15+ year members for their dedication and service to AASPA.

15 Year Members

Bill Briggman
 Vincent Citarelli
 Randy Davis
 Linda Kaiser
 Michael Rupprecht
 Andrea Voelker
 Michelle Washington
 Shay Williamson

20 Year Members

Kim Chambers

25 Year Members

Cathy Donovan
 Nancy Jones-Oltjenbruns

AASPA Past Presidents



RECOGNIZING AASPA'S BRIGHTEST

HERB SALINGER PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD
 Recipient: Shawn Williams



Shawn Williams

NEW MEMBER AWARD
 Recipient: Dr. Celeste Alexander



Dr. Celeste Alexander

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP AWARD
 Recipient: Dr. Justin Schooley



Dr. Justin Schooley

ARCH S. BROWN AFFILATE EXCELLENCE AWARD
 Recipients: IASPA (IL) & AASPA (AL)



IASPA (IL)



AASPA (AL)

WILLIAM L. HUNTER DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION AWARD
 Recipient: Richland County School District Two



Richland County School District Two

NEWSLETTER AWARD
 Recipients: Compass Charter School & TASP (TX)



Compass Charter School

HR DIGITAL BRANDING DEVELOPMENT AWARD & C.S. ROBINSON DISTRICT INNOVATION AWARD
 Recipient: Toledo Public Schools



Toledo Public Schools

HR SPECIALIST/ SUPPORT STAFF AWARD
 Recipients: Rebecca Ziccardi (Region 2)
 Melissa Quesenberry (Region 5)



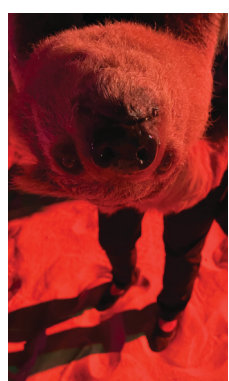
Rebecca Ziccardi (Region 2)



Melissa Quesenberry (Region 5)

Congratulations to these award winners! We appreciate all that you do for the advancement of K-12 human capital leadership and your dedication to AASPA.

2022 CONFERENCE PHOTOS



2022 LEON BRADLEY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

ANGELA MORALES



Angela Morales is a first-generation graduate student pursuing her master's degree in Speech Language Pathology alongside a Teacher of Students with Speech and Language Disabilities Certification at Stony Brook University. It is her career goal to work with students in overcoming barriers and any fears of participating in society due to their communication disorders/ impairments. Angela enjoys mentoring other college students by volunteering her time as a board member for the Fred Schaufeld Scholarship Program, a comprehensive scholarship program. In May 2023, Angela looks forward to becoming a school-based Bilingual Speech-Language Pathologist to collaborate with other educators and allied health professions in order to improve the communication skills of future generations.

SAMUEL BUCHANAN, SR.



I am the Dean of Students at a large High School in Pinal County. I am a lifelong learner and am currently working to complete a master's degree in Educational Leadership. I have also obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership from Grand Canyon University. Masters of Education from University of Phoenix in Special Education. (Cross CAT) I worked in the Department of Corrections for 17 years and thought I would retire from there. But after moving to Arizona, I discovered that I was lacking the education to get ahead. I entered college in 2002 at 40 years old with the determination to never to look back. This scholarship will help me complete the coursework necessary to obtain my Administrative Certification.

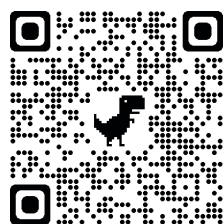
NAKIYAH WASHINGTON



I attend Piedmont University. I compete on the Women's Basketball Team, as well as the Track and Field Team. I graduated in 2019 from Adairsville High School, a school located in Bartow County. While there, I was a tri-sport athlete and continued to manage a 3.96 GPA. This also happens to be my current GPA at Piedmont University as well. As I enter my final semester, and I begin student teaching, I reflect on all the teachers that I have encountered. Some had greater impacts than others, but they each taught me a lesson. In a way, they all shaped who I am as a student. For the teachers that made class fun, I did not dread coming to school every day. Since I started taking education classes at Piedmont University, I have been searching for ways to make class engaging while ensuring that the students are still learning. My goal in life is to change the way students view school. I wanted to conclude by saying thank you for this scholarship. I lost my father, who was my primary parent, last year to a battle with pancreatic cancer. I recently lost my great grandmother who also had a hand in raising me. She was one of my biggest cheerleaders and supporters. With all the hardship that life has thrown my way it is nice to not have to stress about financial hardships in my last semester.



THE LEON BRADLEY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD is intended for minority college students pursuing a degree in 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 scholarship. 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.



Donate to the Leon Bradley Scholarship!

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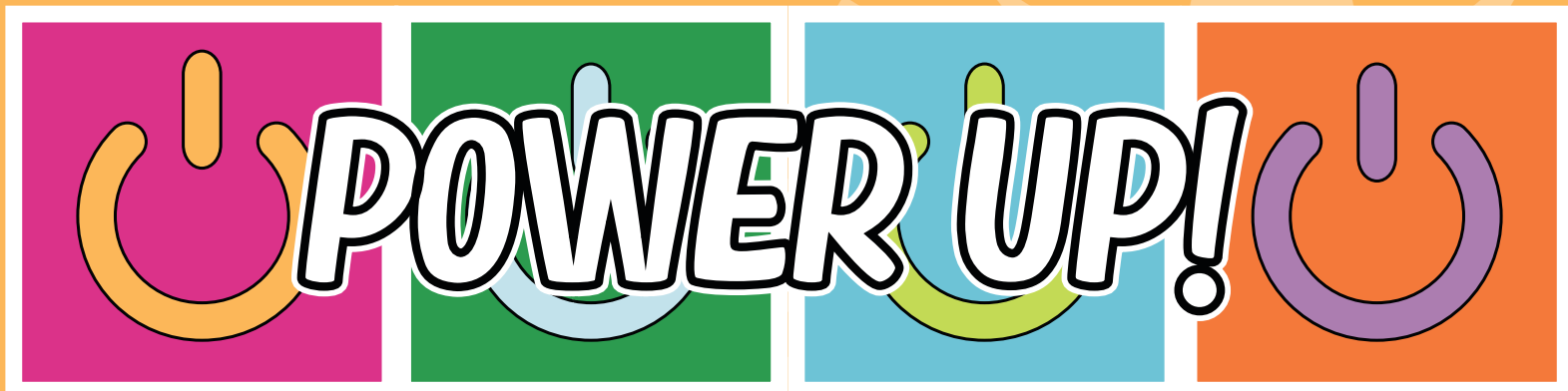
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