

PERSPECTIVE

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

81ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS NEW ORLEANS, LA 2019

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Who is Taking Care of the Leader?
- Your Staff's Mental Health Matters
- Considering New Teachers' Perspectives of the Hiring Process
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2019 - 2020
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President's Corner From the Desk of Dr. Beth Dalton, AASPA President



As they say in New Orleans "laissez les bon temps rouler" or "let the good times roll". After our recent time in New Orleans, AASPA has much to celebrate! The Annual Conference held last month in New Orleans was a historical first for both number of conference registrants and number of AASPA members. We had 756 registrants at the conference and AASPA can boast an all-time high of over 2500 members. There were over 100 clinics and ignite sessions along with 55 exhibitors. As a membership, we raised over \$5,000 for the Leon Bradley Scholarship fund. In addition, we donated \$1500 to PAWS and stuffed over 1500 backpacks with school supplies for three local Louisiana schools. Finally, the Executive Board is proud to share that our annual budget has again ended in the black.

As the new Executive Board begins its work, I am excited to welcome Dr. Cathy Donovan back to the board as President-Elect. Dr. Kim Chambers will be serving another term as Recording Secretary. In addition, I would like to welcome the new Regional Representatives, Jennifer DuVall from Corvallis, Oregon who will be serving Region 1, Kevin Walton from North Haven, Connecticut who will be serving Region 3 and David Robertson from McClellan Park, California who will be serving Region 4. Members of the Executive Board volunteer their time and efforts to make AASPA a successful organization.

The work of the Executive Board is directed by the AASPA strategic plan. We are in the third year of our five-year strategic plan which will fine tune and improve the services, resources and support provided to our members. The most exciting new resource this coming year will be an updated website. We anticipate improved membership access, the ability for members to track their professional development and enhanced resources for each and every member.

I encourage you to get involved in our organization. Join a committee, write an article for one of our newsletters, facilitate a webinar or lead a Twitter chat. You always get back more than you give! Contact the office and ask how you can contribute.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your AASPA President this coming year. On behalf of the AASPA Executive Board and staff, let me say we look forward to continuing to meet your needs by providing the tools and opportunities for you to effectively lead your district's human capital management.

Regards,

Beth Dalton
AASPA President



WHO IS TAKING CARE OF THE LEADER?

by Patty Corum, Executive Director;
MOASPA; St. Louis, MO

I've spent a career working hard to do things that probably were beyond my God-given capacity only because I "thought" I could. That meant giving up a lot of things that probably should have been more important, but in the end, feeling successful and accomplished. I'll give credit to my parents for always telling me, "You can do anything you set your mind to," and therefore, the next job, the next degree, the next task – I did, knowing I may not have had the needed intellect or talent, but I did have the courage and drive. All of that is positive, and as I look back on a thirty-year career in education, I feel proud. At the same time, I now know there are things I could have done a little differently that would have made me a better servant, leader, family member and friend. I have now learned, at age 55, that if you don't take care of yourself, it's hard to effectively take care of others, and that's the one element I didn't think about as I was making my way through the first three decades of my adult life.

The element, self-care is the piece that I would like to pass along to those experiencing what I experienced. Self-care, taking care of one's mind, body and spirit to enhance wellness (my definition), is critical as you live and lead. As I look back, I think I could have been a better person to others and could have enjoyed myself more if during my stressful career as a school administrator, I'd focused more on certain aspects of wellness. The benefits of self-care have been described over and over and include things like better focus, concentration and higher productivity, maintaining a better resistance to disease and enjoying higher self-esteem and overall happiness.

In this article, I will describe the six dimensions of wellness according to Dr. Bill Hettler, co-founder of

the National Wellness Institute (NWI). I will also share my findings from a survey given (to 17-90 year olds) to aid me in understanding others' perspectives on self-care and wellness as it relates to the six dimensions. My hope is that readers become more aware of their own wellness and incorporate healthy habits into daily routines. Noted author John C. Maxwell states, "You'll never change your life until you change something you do daily." I live a happier life today because I have incorporated all six dimensions into my daily routines; something I could have taken the time to implement thirty years ago, but didn't.

NWI describes Physical Wellness as a focus on whole body awareness and getting the right amount of activity, sleep and nutrition to experience peak physical performance. It's what most people, especially over the age of 30, focused on in my survey more than any other dimension. I can relate, because during my busiest time in life, career, parenting and going back to school, I realized that I needed to take care of myself, but what that meant to me at the time included only three things: sleeping eight hours, eating healthy foods and walking 16-20 miles a week. I didn't consider any other aspect of wellness. Although physical wellness might be the easiest dimension to define and understand, it may also be the most difficult to implement due to the time and effort it takes. None the less, the benefits are hard to ignore!

NWI describes Emotional Wellness as a strong self-awareness and the ability to manage your own emotions, set your own boundaries and choose your emotional reactions to people and events. I wish I had paid more attention to this dimension not only for my own health, but also to model for others. Now I realize that if a leader doesn't demonstrate emotional

wellness to others, then others have less confidence that the leader can take care of them. I wish I had shown others how to take mental breaks, have positive self-talk and choose their own emotions rather than letting others take over. As a leader there are so many people who want your time, assistance and energy. It's an exhausting task and often leaves leaders emotionally drained. My suggestion for leaders today is to listen to what some of those under thirty years old said in my survey: we are in charge of how we react, don't hold on to negativity, get into nature, be open about your feelings and finally, take the vacation days that are allotted! In some cases, these young people recalled watching their parents ignore mental and emotional health, and decided they would take a different, more healthy route.

NWI describes Social Wellness as being authentic, having mutually rewarding relationships and giving and receiving support. Just about the time I was interviewing people for this article, I was also reading a book called, *The Power of the Other* by Dr. Henry Cloud. Dr. Cloud talks about the enormous impact we have on one another, and how that impact can be very positive, very negative or anywhere in between. In his book Dr. Cloud describes four different kinds of relationships as corner one, corner two, corner three and corner four. Corner four relationships are supportive, authentic, healthy and what we need as humans to feel successful and supported and to effectively grow in a positive, productive way. To me, social wellness is making an effort to spend time with those who can help us to be stronger and healthier human beings and spend less time with those who don't.

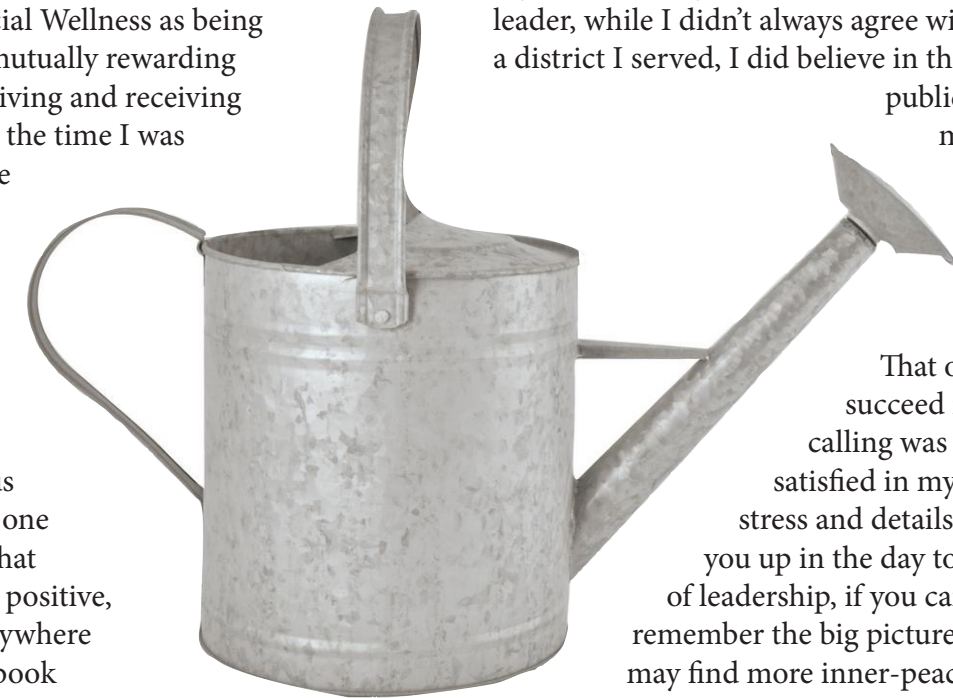
NWI describes Intellectual Wellness as having deep curiosity, an adaptive mindset and a hunger for learning. It is a dimension that, during my survey, people who were in school, busy jobs or challenging

careers seemed to take for granted and described activities related to cognitive growth as a natural part of everyday life. As a leader, this one usually isn't hard to achieve because effective leaders are always learning new things. The importance here is to give yourself credit for self-care where credit is due. Staying abreast of new information, and staying sharp so that you can articulate new learning to others is a part of our wellness and by doing that, we are contributing to our own good health.

NWI describes Occupational Wellness as having work that is meaningful and makes you feel personal mastery. The study of occupational wellness may cause one to reflect on their personal purpose in life. I think about occupational wellness as an alignment between my work and my life's mission. As an educational leader, while I didn't always agree with every policy of a district I served, I did believe in the overall power of public education and my role in helping teachers and school leaders so that they could better help children.

That overall drive to succeed in a meaningful calling was what kept me satisfied in my work. Although stress and details can often swallow you up in the day to day operations of leadership, if you can step back and remember the big picture and purpose, you may find more inner-peace.

NWI describes Spiritual Wellness as recognizing our search for meaning and purpose in our existence. Many of the participants in my survey described spiritual wellness as attending church and spending time in daily prayer. Another way to think about spiritual wellness is to ask these questions: What is the meaning of my life and how is it connected to something higher? What's my purpose? What gives me hope? How do I get through tough times? Do my values guide my decisions? I find myself thinking about my higher calling during mental breaks, social interactions, walks, as I assess the meaning of my work, and when I read thought-provoking books and articles, all other dimensions of wellness. I believe the



connection between the six dimensions is a final step in overall self-care, and spiritual wellness reminds me that we can often practice two or three dimensions at the same time.

Overall wellness does not come when we're only taking care of ourselves every now and then. Self-care has to be a part of our daily routine. One could probably not imagine waking up in the morning and skipping the habit of brushing our teeth. It's such a habitual behavior, we sometimes don't even realize we're doing it, and often, if asked, might not even remember the episode; but we know we did. What if healthy habits in all dimensions of wellness were a part of our daily life? What if positive self-talk (emotional), having a better relationship with those in our community (social), revisiting our life purpose with our daily work (occupational), deep breathing (physical), seeking new learning (intellectual) and daily meditation (spiritual) were things we did as unconsciously as brushing our teeth? What if some of our unhealthy habits were replaced by healthy habits, and thus became a comfortable part of who we are? The choice is ours. We must have the courage and the drive to develop and practice healthy routines daily if we're going to enjoy the benefits. My message is simple to fellow leaders. We have an obligation to take care of ourselves if we are going to be effective leaders. To successfully lead and serve, others are counting on us to be strong and well.



Dr. Patty Corum is the Executive Director for Missouri Association of School Personnel Administrators (MOASPA) where she has served for six years. In addition to working with over 150 MOASPA members, she serves as an educational consultant for school leaders in the areas of observation and feedback, coaching, effective communication, negotiations and overall leadership. Dr. Corum also serves as Scholar in Residence at University of Missouri, St. Louis where she serves on the leadership team and teaches aspiring school administrators. Prior to her current positions, Dr. Corum worked for almost three decades in public education, starting as a teacher in Boone County and Liberty, principal in Liberty and Fort Zumwalt, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and finally as Deputy Superintendent in the Fort Zumwalt School District, all in her home state of Missouri.

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PLANS OF ASSISTANCE: ADDRESSING TEACHER PERFORMANCE ISSUES

by Nancy Hungerford, Founding Partner;
Hungerford Law Firm; Oregon City, OR

All school districts must deal with at least a few poorly-performing teachers—whether “newbies” who haven’t been able to demonstrate satisfactory expertise during probationary years, or experienced teachers whose poor teaching skills or lack of effort jeopardize students’ long-term success.

In Oregon, decades of experience with “programs of assistance for improvement” have created a set of expectations as to how inadequately performing post-probationary teachers must be assisted, and then can be held accountable, for their classroom performance.

Since the adoption of Oregon’s initial teacher evaluation law in 1981, the statute has required the use of a “program of assistance for improvement” (abbreviated POA or PAI) for teachers who are beyond the three year probationary period, if such a POA is needed to remedy deficiencies in performance. Generally, such PAIs are not found necessary prior to dismissal for “neglect of duty,” or “insubordination,” or similar instances of misconduct.

The Oregon “Accountability for Schools for the 21st Century Law” (ORS 342.805-.934) [formerly the “Fair Dismissal Law”] requires the use of a “Program of assistance for improvement” for licensed employees, including teachers and administrators, under certain circumstances. In the case of a post-

probationary (“contract”) teacher or administrator, the Fair Dismissal Appeals Board (FDAB) will expect appropriate implementation of a Plan of Assistance whenever dismissal is based on “inadequate performance” or “inefficiency.”

Two dismissal cases in the late 1980’s, involving a 27-year high school math teacher in a medium-sized district and a 33-year science teacher in a small high school, established specific expectations for “Plans of Assistance” that would demonstrate appropriate assistance and provide adequate documentation to support dismissal for “inadequate performance.”

These two FDAB cases, and another two more recent dismissal challenges, set the expectations for establishing and implementing an effective POA:

1. Make sure you have documentation of the problem that has led to the Plan of Assistance. Ideally, use goal setting as an initial problem-solving approach for 1-3 months before deciding whether a POA is necessary or if the teacher can improve with a less formal corrective approach.
2. Use POAs for situations where the teacher needs to improve skills that relate to the district’s evaluation criteria. If it’s a case of rule violations or misconduct, use corrective discipline (letters of reprimand, unpaid suspension and ultimately dismissal if behavior doesn’t change).

3. Include no more than three major areas of deficiency (such as “long term planning,” “classroom management,” “delivery of instruction”), although each may have multiple specific sub-parts under the general heading.
4. Include specific, measurable expectations that describe the quality of performance you hope to see. (“Students are consistently at task, engaged in learning activities throughout each class period, including transition periods and at the beginning and end of class time.”)
5. Before finalizing the POA, involve the teacher (and representative, if allowed under your contract) in reviewing a draft of the POA, especially to give input into the “assistance to be provided” section.
6. Make sure that the evaluator follows through on everything promised in the POA (frequency of meetings, numbers of observations, and feedback).
7. Provide extra assistance (help from a TOSA, books or articles to read, time to visit skilled teachers) and then ask the teacher to report back and demonstrate what they learned from that resource.
8. Recognize efforts at improvement but be careful that your observation report clearly identifies whether the lesson, as a whole, meets all District standards. Don’t mislead the teacher!
9. Establish a three or four-month POA, with the expectation that significant improvement will be demonstrated during that time period. For a long-term teacher, extending the POA for another 2-3 months if some or all of the expectations haven’t been met, is generally advisable, especially if some progress has been made. Hold a mid-plan meeting to give a progress report to that date on each area of deficiency. If dismissal is a possibility for failing to meet the POA expectations, state that in the mid-term meeting summary.
10. Honestly determine whether the teacher has met the POA, based on the specific data gathered during observations (5-6 minimum) and other sources of information. High quality observation reports are the key to demonstrating inadequate performance, if there has been little or no improvement. Use observation techniques such as (1) on-task analysis based on frequent sampling during the lesson, (2) teacher-student interaction data, (3) verbatim recording and review of “teacher talk” versus “student talk” during a lesson, (4) teacher attention and interaction with students having difficulty and students on IEPs and 504 Plans. It is critical that the method used captures data relevant to the POA’s expectations.

Because of the FDAB decisions in the early, definitive cases of “inadequate performance” (all decided in the districts’ favor), the number of performance-based dismissal cases since the 1980’s has been very few – about one a decade since for the whole state. Districts know the standards that must be met in order to prevail in a FDAB hearing – and attorneys for teacher and administrator associations do too, so most cases where POAs are not successfully met end with resignations. That’s good news for administrators, and teachers, and especially for students in our classrooms.



Nancy Hungerford is the founding partner of the Hungerford Law Firm, which represents about half of Oregon’s 175 school districts in matters of teacher dismissals, labor relations, special education, and other school law topics. Nancy represented school districts in most of the “inadequate performance” cases before FDAB during the past 40 years. She has assisted school administrators with developing and implementing at least 500 POAs.

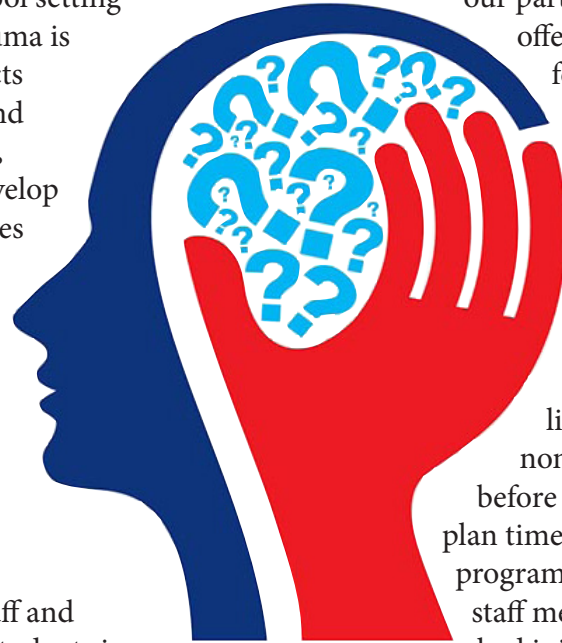
YOUR STAFF'S MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

by Stephanie Alexander, Director of Federal Programs and Personnel Services; Jennings School District; Jennings, MO

We often talk about the tremendous amount of trauma our students are exposed to during their educational years. Childhood trauma affects their ability to succeed academically in a school setting and environment. Student trauma is a universal crisis. Trauma affects students of urban, suburban and rural communities. As a result, school systems continue to develop and create wrap-around services to support our students and their families. Partnerships with mental health agencies, health care clinics on campus and parenting resources provide supports to ensure our families and students are mentally well.

Have we thought about our staff and teachers who work and serve students in trauma, while experiencing their trauma and endure stress from working with traumatic students? The effects of staff trauma are evident in increased absences from school, increased student behavior referrals and inconsistent or inadequate work performance. As a result, the overall instruction of the classroom, culture and climate of the school is affected. All may be signs that your staff member is dealing with some matters of their own. How do we, as school systems, support staff? Life happens, and most of the time, those life-changing events happen without prior notice.

In the Jennings School District, Jennings, MO, we recognized that staff trauma had begun to affect our educational community. Although we offer EAP (Employee Assistance Program) services to staff members who are dealing with life challenges, there is no clear way to follow up and ensure that the employee is receiving services they need to be healthy mentally



and emotionally. Implementing a fall break right after the end of the 1st quarter allows teachers and staff to reset and positively finish the semester. Through our partnership with TrustWellness, we also offer healthy eating and lifestyle classes for staff to learn how to manage their food choices, prepare healthy meals and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Providing a therapist on campus, is the most important resource the district has given staff. This service is free and confidential to staff, allowing them to take the much needed time to talk with a licensed professional during their non-instructional times, such as before school, after school or during their plan time. Since we have begun offering this program, we have recorded the number of staff members who have reached out and had initial conversations with our therapist and have begun to utilize the service on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis. We are confirming and recognizing when school staff is mentally and emotionally healthy; our student receives effective instruction in a safe and secure school climate. We want what is best for students and ensuring they are first in all that we do inside and outside the classroom.



Stephanie Alexander is the Director of Federal Programs and Personnel for the Jennings School District in Jennings, MO. She has served the district for 21 years and has worked in HR for the past 12 years. She is currently in her third term as President of MOASPA-STL for the 2019-2020 school year. Alexander has been a member of AASPA for 6 years. Her passion for urban schools, HR knowledge and skill make her an asset to the Jennings community and urban school districts.



Places to go

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CONSIDERING NEW TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF THE HIRING PROCESS

by Zack Howard, Assistant Superintendent, HR; Pickerington Local District; Pickerington, OH

During a summer evening on vacation my son and I took the boat out trolling for fish. My son looked at me with a bored look and asked, "Dad, why aren't we catching any fish?" In response, I said, "Son, they don't call it catching. It wouldn't be a challenge if they jumped into the boat." I waited for him to tell me, "Yeah, but it'd be nice to have at least one in the boat!" But, as we continued trolling down the middle of the lake, I thought to myself, why aren't we catching any fish? There are several hypotheses that existed beyond the obvious that I'm not a very good fishing boat captain. Maybe there are less fish in the lake than in years past? Maybe their growth is being stunted somehow? Maybe they're not in the area we are fishing? Or maybe, we're trying to attract them with the wrong bait? One might suggest trying to recruit teachers and bring them on board has parallels to fishing. For example, there is evidence to suggest that less teachers are entering the profession altogether, less are being retained beyond three years, there are significant shortages in certain teaching areas and do we really know what attracts them to our specific schools? Have we asked them? Our hiring protocol should be strategic and not akin to trolling a fishing lure down the middle of the lake and hoping we get a bite!

Studies show the hiring process is information poor and new teachers must make decisions about where to work with limited knowledge of the actual school characteristics. Hiring processes that take place at the last-minute lead to teachers leaving their schools and the districts at much greater rates than their

peers hired on time. Purposeful sampling was used in a study within a Midwestern suburban school district close to a large city to seek the perspectives of new teachers of their own hiring experience. The insight gained from new teachers, fresh off of the hiring process themselves, is helpful to hiring school administrators. There were five themes that emerged from the study including the following:

- New teachers expect genuine connections with their building principal;
- New teachers prefer conversation-style interviews;
- New teachers expect opportunities for collaboration;
- New teachers recognize the hiring process can be arduous; and
- Knowing of available district resources is important to new teachers.

The most prominent theme that emerged from the study was that new teachers value a genuine connection with their building principal. The data from this study and a review of the literature reinforces the idea that teachers are interviewing the district for the right fit as much as the district is interviewing the teacher for the right fit. "New hires who indicate satisfaction with the hiring process, and who feel that they were well-informed about the position, begin their new jobs with a positive outlook". Robert, one of the study participants, added this about his interview experience: My principal was very friendly right from the start during my screening interview and it was more like conversation I felt, than anything, so it felt very relaxed, and she asked me things that were kind of outside of teaching. Because I'm from north east

[REDACTED] and she was like why would you want to move down to, further away from home and why would you, like what draws you to where we're at? And things like that, and we talked about the use of technology in the school. And so, it was more than just teaching. Like it was more than just like the general questions we got. Kind of more specific and personal I guess, which I guess helped me feel comfortable while I was getting to know her.

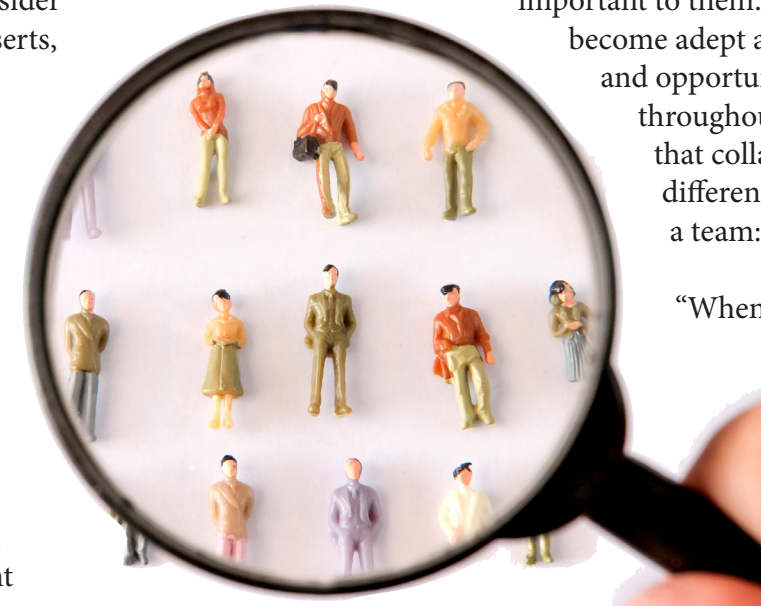
The second theme that emerged through this research study was that teachers want a conversational-style interview to help put them at ease. Consider Hindman who asserts, "Interviews are opportunities. They are an opportunity for two or more people to gather for the specific purpose of learning how well a potential hire might benefit the school, as well as for the applicant to gather more information about the position and organization. Interviews are about the people". Ember recalled her pursuit of earning a teaching job offer and her struggles before and during her time in the [REDACTED] Local Schools. Specifically, she discussed the value of a conversational-style interview and how it made her feel: "I didn't really learn anything new about the (other) district in the process. They asked, the standard like good questions, to ask. You know. But it was all surface level. It was very much, I felt like I was in the firing seat, you know, and on the hot seat, and I think that's one of the biggest differences when I interviewed with my admin team (here). The administrators here, it was a conversation. And that was, the first conversation I had had with a school administrator since being in student teaching. So, I think that was a big difference for me too."

The third connection made during the research study was that new teachers expressed they value earning

about collaboration opportunities within the district during the hiring process. The new teachers conveyed that they felt the opportunity to work as a team would assist their maturation process as educators. One of the fundamental goals of teacher collaboration is to improve instructional practice and thereby presumably increase student achievement. Collaboration gives teachers access to new ideas, creative energy, and moral support, which support them to reflect, deliberate, and adjust their practices. New teachers are coming into the profession with the understanding that working with their colleagues to share and implement lessons and instructional strategies is important to them. Hiring administrators need to become adept at explaining mentorship programs and opportunities for teachers to collaborate throughout the school day. Jean conveyed that collaboration was important to make a difference in student achievement as a team:

"When I went through the process here, I could tell the district was student-centered. I saw an emphasis on students in general. A lot of the questions and just like overall feel was about how I would interact with students, and how I would interact with my co-workers and my team. I saw more of a family emphasis than just an advancement, of how can I be better and, how can you move up in your career versus how can you make a difference together."

The data revealed in the study and supported by literature indicate that the process can be arduous and could be made more efficient. Otherwise, we risk losing out on high quality candidates. Consider, for example, the districts that missed out on hiring Ember because of their inefficient and extremely lengthy process for hiring teachers. Ember detailed a harrowing experience as a new teacher working toward earning her first job offer: "I applied to like thirty-five districts and went on over fifty interviews. Last year. And, it was such an experience because it came down to I had to find the right fit too. First when I started interviewing I said oh I have to be perfect for every single district, and every single time, and as



I interviewed with these people I realized it needs to be the right fit for me too. And I especially recognized that when I interviewed in a district that really cared about test scores. And, to the point where they said, you know if a kid is disrupting what are you going to do for the test scores? And it just, it rubbed me so wrong. And I said to myself I want to be in a district that cares about the student, and their learning. And in applying for this district that's what mattered to me."

Sarah detailed experiences from other districts where she was worried about securing a position but felt frustrated with the interview process because she felt like they only asked surface-level questions. This is an important detail because research shows that increasing candidates' knowledge during the hiring process is associated with higher job satisfaction rates. David revealed frustration with completing applications and wondering if anybody was ever really looking at them? Ultimately, when a district decides to go with another candidate, how a district shares their decision to hire or not hire matters. Sarah in particular pointed out the irony of what is expected of teachers in providing feedback without receiving it for themselves during the hiring process. "We teach kids to ask questions and learn from their experiences. And then I go on an interview and a principal can't even call me and tell me, hey we went with someone else and here's how you can do better, I found that very frustrating". Consider that the hiring process itself can be used in a district as a recruiting tool. If candidates have a favorable experience as they go through the hiring process, word of mouth is likely to spread, or they will feel compelled to apply again for the next opening.

The final theme that emerged with every research participant was the appreciation of learning about resources available to new teachers. A review of research reveals that school districts should support beginning teachers with physical support, including helping teachers arrange and organize their classrooms, providing an orientation program specific to the district, providing a mentor for ongoing support, and professional development that models high yield instructional strategies for student achievement and classroom management.

John shared this in reference to the resources in his district: "The resources, especially with where I'm at now, they have one-to-one electronic devices – every

student has a computer, there's lots of like technology that's available to me that I don't have to pay for. I've been in schools where the teacher is forking it out of their own pocket. My brother and sister, and sister-in-law, are all teachers, and they have to pay for even their own paper. So, like when I was applying at districts, I didn't want to be somewhere that was necessarily, not to be mean but struggling, because that means that I was going to have to struggle in addition. The district, seems very well-off, it's very well-supported by the community. So, that was a big part of it. "

This research study has shown that new teachers value induction and mentoring and it would be a miss for hiring administrators if they're not prepared to accurately explain the program to teaching candidates during the hiring process.

If we consider the perceptions of new teachers as they reflect on their own hiring experiences, we can use their firsthand experience to help us hone in on what we can do as hiring administrators to improve our teacher hiring. Ideally, we provide an information-rich process that allows both sides (prospective teacher and district) to feel they have the right information to make an informed decision. If we use a great process, even in situations where we don't offer the candidate a position, they may walk away from the district thinking- "I didn't get this position this time, but I learned more about the district in the process and my view of the district is more favorable now than it was when I went into it".



Dr. Zack Howard began his career in secondary education 20 years ago while teaching High School Science in the Pickerington Local School District near central Ohio. He has served roles as a Department Chair, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, High School Principal, Director of Assessment & Accountability, and currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent of HR. The Pickerington Local School District has over 1200 employees and approximately 10,900 students. Howard is an adjunct professor for Concordia University- Chicago.

Thank you for 21 great years.

Here's to many more!

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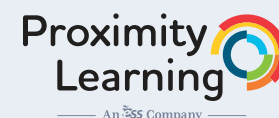
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SYSTEMS THINKING & THE JOURNEY TO GOING PAPERLESS

by Russell Miller, Assistant Superintendent of HR;
Andover Public Schools; Andover, KS
Cydney Miller, Sr. Solutions Consultant
Frontline Education; Clarksville, TN

Since moving into district-level administration, I have become much more aware of how critical systems-level thinking and systems processes are to the organization. In “Schools That Learn,” Peter Senge defines system-wide thinking as an effort to “enact change throughout an organization (like a school system) instead of in one narrow domain... [this is] generally more effective than working in isolation.” This principle is one that drove our district’s approach to instructional technology in the classroom, and we’ve seen just how impactful it can be. We’ve seen how the magic happens when pedagogy, content knowledge and technology convene and create a framework more impactful than any of the individual components can be alone.

However, in the back office, that’s not always the situation. A few years ago, we decided to do something about the disconnect between our processes. We saw that the Finance department had their own processes and system. Meanwhile, we had our own processes, filing cabinets and systems for evaluation, professional learning, the student information system and more. None of those systems talked to each other and they were all managed by a few people wearing a lot of hats. This probably sounds pretty familiar, right?

Our district was determined to expand our use of integrated systems to support HR and business functions and cut down on our reliance on paper-based process. So in 2016, we began a conversation between the superintendent, the business office, our HR department and IT about systematically integrating these systems and processes to bring a greater level of organization and efficiency to the district. Here’s how we made it happen.

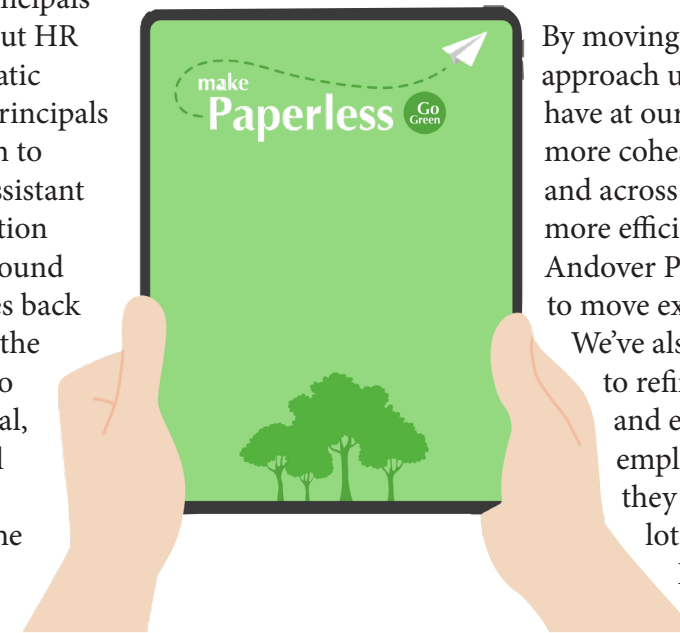
First, we took stock of the different systems we had in place, how they were functioning and whether they were meeting our needs, as well as what products were available in the market. We focused on integrated systems and software that we were already familiar with. We knew that these products were already working well in our district and played well with our finance system – something that can be a challenge when implementing software.

Then, we recommended a path forward to our Board of Education. We didn’t want to have to spend a lot of money, so we abandoned some of the products we had been previously using that either didn’t work as well as we wanted, or software that took a significant amount of time just to maintain. For example, we had been piloting a records system for two years, and only with certified staff, while still using paper to manage classified employees’ information. The IT department was also developing a separate software system, from a copier vendor of all places, to potentially help manage classified onboarding. We decided not to renew these systems and others, and decided to implement on platform.

We were a little concerned about moving our employees to the new platform, but it turned out to be one of the simplest things we did, and it really came off without a hitch. We went live a little over a year ago, and it’s made a real difference to have integrated applications. It’s been great being able to shift between the applications and have each one open at the same time in different tabs. We also found even more reports and metrics in all of the applications, which are very useful.

As for implementing the other products, one of our significant challenges was that our go-live target date was just before the hiring season, and our previous system’s renewal date was in mid-March. We worked in both applications for a while before shutting the old one off. That gave us a bit of a challenge, but we were able to start collecting applications on time and customize what applicants could see. We then spent a lot of time organizing and standardizing the new hire onboarding process, which had previously been extremely decentralized. Quite frankly, it had been highly fragmented and existed in silos that in many ways prevented necessary collaboration and efficiency from even being an option.

As a result, we shut off access to some staff demographics updates in our student information system and retrained our clerical staff and administrators on the new system and expectations. We can now make sure that our onboarding processes are being followed. For example, only HR gets to push the hire button – principals recommend candidates, but HR hires. We’ve set up automatic workflows so that when principals submit a recommendation to hire, my administrative assistant receives the recommendation and completes the background check. Then, once it comes back clear, she clicks “Submit,” the recommendation comes to me for review and approval, and then it goes to payroll and finance, then on to onboarding. Eventually, the supervisor is notified that the process is complete



and the person has been hired, but they are not cleared to work yet. All of that happens in the workflow.

Following that, we have an onboarding process that is triggered for new hires. We send out a variety of digitally completed forms to the new hire, starting with an Acceptable Use Policy. That’s our agreement on using the district internet, email and other technology. The new hires sign that digitally and send it back through the system, where it automatically goes to the IT department. Then, IT sets up the new hire’s email address and network sign-on, clicks “Submit”, and it comes back to us so we can update the finance software with the employee’s information and get their benefits started. That’s just one of the forms that go out to the new hires – all online, all paperless and managed through workflows and the packets we set up in the system. Once the onboarding forms and employee orientation are completed, everything transfers with the touch of a button and serves as the foundation of the employee’s digital personnel file.

By moving to a much more integrated approach using the technological tools we have at our disposal, we’ve been able to work more cohesively within our department and across the district, and are becoming more efficient day by day. So, what’s next for Andover Public Schools? We’re continuing to move existing records into the software.

We’ve also set our sights on continuing to refine our administrative processes and expanding our use of forms, and employees’ awareness of how much they can do in the system. We have a lot of opportunity ahead of us, and I’m looking forward to the road ahead.



Dr. Russell K. Miller serves as Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources for Andover Public Schools USD #385 in Andover, Kansas. Miller has served as vocal music teacher, building administrator, and district administrator in south central Kansas for over 35 years. The past eight years have been focused on serving the business and human capital management functions of public education.



Cydney Miller currently serves as a Sr. Human Capital Management Consultant for Frontline Education. She was previously a Human Resources Director for a 4000+ employee school district in Tennessee and oversaw all facets of the HR process to include recruiting, staffing, HR law compliance, substitute management, benefits and retention.

Conference Highlights

Unmask Your Potential | New Orleans, LA

In October of 2019, AASPA worked to unmask our potential, as we set out to provide our members with a week of quality professional development, networking opportunities and entertainment. What resulted was the AASPA 81st Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA - a four-day event that attracted school personnel administrators from all around the country. The conference was a huge success, drawing over 700 attendees with more than 50 exhibit booths, 12 pre-conference sessions, 100 clinic/ignite sessions and adding another page to the Association's prodigious over 80-year history.

2018-2019 Executive Board



2019-2020 Election Results:
 President-Elect: Cathy Donovan
 Secretary: Kim Chambers
 Region 1 Representative: Jennifer DuVall
 Region 3 Representative: Kevin Walton
 Region 4 Representative: David Robertson

2020-2021 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 Recognitions Award was presented to outgoing board members Robyn Bean, Region 1, Regina Terrell, Region 3 and Kerry Parker, Region 4.

The gavel was passed from 2017-2018 President, Dr. Justin Schooley, to 2019-2020 President, Dr. Beth Dalton

The 2019-2020 budget was approved.

AASPA Past Presidents



AASPA 25+ Year Members Recognized

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

- Barry Nettles - 50 years
- Carrie Durley - 35 years
- Fred Gissendaner - 33 years
- Janet Gissendaner - 27 years
- Patrick Strauss - 27 years

Recognizing AASPA's Brightest

HERB SALINGER PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD
 Recipient: Brian White

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD
 Recipient: Dr. Amy Dillion

WILLIAM L. HUNTER POINT OF LIGHT AWARD
 Recipient: New Britain Public Schools

NEW MEMBER AWARD
 Recipient: Janine Mobley

ARCH S. BROWN AWARD
 Recipients: IASPA (IL)
 TASP (TX)

HR SPECIALISTS/ SUPPORT STAFF AWARD
 Recipients: Tara Lofton (Region 1)
 Jennifer Ng (Region 2)
 Laura Mendez (Region 4)
 Melissa Sturgeon (Region 5)
 Neil Otto (Region 6)

THE NEWSLETTER AWARD PROGRAM
 Recipients: East Baton Rouge Parish School System
 McKinney ISD

DIGITAL BRANDING AWARD
 Recipient: Auburn-Washburn USD 437

C.S. ROBINSON AWARD
 Recipient: Rutherford Public Schools



Brian White



Dr. Amy Dillion



New Britain Public Schools



Janine Mobley



Lolly Guerra, TASP



Michael Johann, IASPA



East Baton Rouge Parish School System



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Auburn-Washburn USD 437



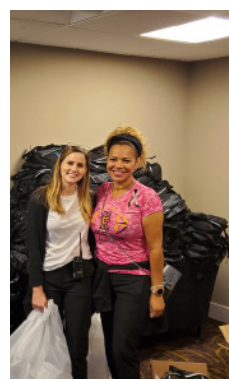
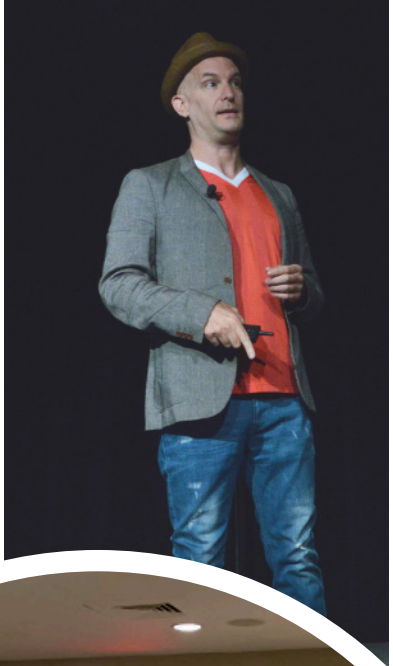
Rutherford Public Schools



Tara Lofton (Region 1), Jennifer Ng (Region 2), Laura Mendez (Region 4), Melissa Sturgeon (Region 5) and Neil Otto (Region 6)

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.

2019 Conference Photos



2019 Leon Bradley Scholarship Recipients

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

DAVY YAP

Davy Yap is currently a Lead Academic Coach at Helix Charter High School in San Diego, California where she supports over 500 students in their academics. She graduated from San Diego State University, with a bachelor's degree in Psychology in 2017 where she was an officer in the Student California Teacher Association. After graduation, she was involved in Helix with the after school ASPIRE program, Scholarship Committee and the Classified Staff Union. She is currently enrolled to be a future educator at San Diego State University's single subject social studies credential program. After graduation, Davy's plan is to serve the diverse and urban population in San Diego.



UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

LINDSAY PIÑA GARCIA

Lindsay Pina Garcia is currently attending Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Illinois, pursuing bilingual speech-language pathology. Lindsay was born in Michoacan Mexico and immigrated to the United States in 2000. While attending Kindergarten, Lindsay had to learn English quickly because she wanted to be able to communicate with her peers and make friends. Bilingual classes were not offered so she had a hard time learning and communicating. She knew at that time she wanted to work in a helping profession that could help others communicate. As a bilingual speech language pathologist, she is determined to seek out ways to help underserved Latino communities that cannot afford speech therapy for their children. In addition to attending college, Lindsay is serving as an executive board member for the National Student Speech-Language and Hearing Association.



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 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.

Any members or organizations may send tax deductible contributions for the Leon Bradley Scholarship Fund to the AASPA headquarters at 7201 W. 129th Street, Suite 220, Overland Park, KS 66213.

Thanks!

AASPA would like to thank ANDREW KIM, Desert Orthopaedic Center, Las Vegas, NV and MARK BOSWELL, Mark Boswell Insurance Agency, Cicero, IL, as well as many AASPA members for their generous donations to the 2019 Leon Bradley Scholarship Fund.

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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

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- HR Directors
- Superintendents
- Assistant Superintendents
- Principals
- Business Official
- Any School Administrators involved in recruitment, retention and human capital management

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RETURN REGISTRATION FORM TO: American Association of School Personnel Administrators
7201 W 129th Street, Suite 220 | Overland Park, KS 66213 | P: (913) 327-1222 | Fax: (913) 327-1223
Register online at www.aaspa.org or email sandy@aaspa.org.



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UPCOMING BLENDED COHORTS

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February 1 – February 21, 2020 / Registration Deadline: January 24, 2019

April 1 – April 20, 2020 / Registration Deadline: March 27, 2019

July 1 – July 20, 2020 / Registration Deadline: June 26, 2019

For more information, email kelly@aaspa.org.

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