



# REPORT

## 2024 Superintendent of the Year is Stacey Cole of Storm Lake



**S**tacey Cole, superintendent of Storm Lake Community School District, has been named the 2024 Iowa Superintendent of the Year. Finalists for the award were **Gary DeLacy** of Clinton and **Darwin Lehmann** of Forest City and Central Springs. Nominees included **Kris Einck** of Howard-Winneshiek and South Winneshiek, **Devin Embray** of Glenwood, **Brian Jaeger** of Monticello, **Vickie Murillo** of Council Bluffs and **Mike Pardun** of Denison and Schleswig. SAI congratulates all candidates for their contributions and leadership!

Thank you to selection committee members: Chair **Kristen Rickey** of West Delaware County, **Amy Hawkins** of Dubuque, **Beth Johnsen** of Atlantic, **Gary McEldowney** of Sioux Center, **Tara Paul** of Estherville-Lincoln Central, **Tony Voss** of Hudson and **Doug Wheeler** of College Community.

Superintendent of the Year selection leads off the 2024 Administrator of the Year recognition. SAI will continue the selection process for the remaining six awards throughout the 2023-24 school year. Nominations for 2025 will begin mid-February 2024. Details are available at [sai-iowa.org/awards.cfm](https://sai-iowa.org/awards.cfm).

Learn more about Dr. Cole's leadership in her responses to two prompts.

### What legacy do you wish to leave? What do you hope people say about you as a leader?

The legacy I aspire to leave is that of a builder and a leader who made a lasting impact on individuals and their communities. Throughout my career, I began as a believer, driven by the conviction that there was potential for positive change. My primary focus was on the students I worked with, and I genuinely believed in their potential to shape brighter futures.

Over time, I've sought to evolve from merely being a believer to becoming a builder. This transition represents my commitment to a growth mindset, where I view mistakes not as setbacks, but as opportunities for learning and growth. This shift in perspective has been instrumental in my quest to create more equitable opportunities for both students and adults within my community.

One critical realization has been that not everyone will readily embrace the work I do. Therefore, I've learned to thrive in the discomfort of being a work in progress. I'm committed to achieving more equitable outcomes so I've learned instead of asking questions like "Who is in the room?" I've shifted my mindset towards asking, "Who is trying to get in the room but cannot?" This shift reflects my dedication to inclusivity and breaking down barriers that hinder participation.

A vital aspect of my legacy is the creation of space for emerging leaders who may not have been taken seriously in the past due to their ideas not aligning with the majority. I recognize the importance of nurturing these talents and providing a platform for their voices to be heard. As I lift up these new leaders, I am also mindful of fostering a safe environment for those who perceive the work through a different lens.

In this safe space, individuals with diverse perspectives are not minimized; instead, their unique viewpoints are celebrated. I understand that it is only when we embrace our differences as "different," without assigning judgments of good or bad, that we can create the conditions for leaders to truly thrive. By fostering this inclusive and diverse environment, I aim to leave a legacy of a leader who not only built structures and systems but also facilitated the growth and empowerment of those with unique perspectives and untapped potential.

I hope to be remembered as someone who championed the underrepresented, embraced differences, and created the conditions for future leaders to flourish, ultimately leaving a positive, lasting impact on individuals and society as a whole.

### What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader? What books would you recommend as must-reads?

As a leader, my commitment to personal and professional growth is unwavering. I firmly believe that to lead effectively, I must continuously evolve and adapt. To ensure that I continue to grow and develop as a leader, I employ a multifaceted approach that encompasses both experiential learning and the consumption of diverse literature.

First and foremost, I make a conscious effort to immerse myself in uncomfortable situations regularly. This may involve taking on challenging projects, leading teams with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, or engaging in difficult conversations. I've found that it is in these uncomfortable moments that I learn the most. Adversity and discomfort can serve as catalysts for personal and

- Continued on page 5



## Now open — Annual Conference call for proposals

Planning for SAI Conference 2024 is well underway! A significant part of the conference experience is the Promising Practices series through which we spotlight success stories and lessons learned in local districts across Iowa. Once again, we are calling for proposals for Promising Practices. We invite you to take a moment to reflect on what's going well, what lessons you've learned, and what would be of value to your colleagues. Then, we ask you to consider sharing your leadership with colleagues

through a conference session! Learn more about the process through these [Submission Guidelines](#) and plan to submit a [proposal](#) by January 31, 2024!

### SAI Officers

#### President

Jason Toenges, secondary principal  
Union Community School District  
[j\\_toenges@union.k12.ia.us](mailto:j_toenges@union.k12.ia.us)

#### President-elect

Joe Stutting, superintendent  
North Scott Community School District  
[joe.stutting@north-scott.k12.ia.us](mailto:joe.stutting@north-scott.k12.ia.us)

#### Vice President

Jennifer Schutte, elementary principal  
Postville Community School District  
[jschutte@postville.k12.ia.us](mailto:jschutte@postville.k12.ia.us)

#### Past President

Dan Butler, superintendent  
Western Dubuque Community School District  
[dan.butler@wdbqschools.org](mailto:dan.butler@wdbqschools.org)

### SAI Representative Council

Listed at [sai-iowa.org/representative-council.cfm](http://sai-iowa.org/representative-council.cfm)

### National Representatives

#### AASA Governing Board Members

Chris Coffelt, superintendent  
Central Decatur & Lamoni CSDs  
[chris.coffelt@centraldecatur.org](mailto:chris.coffelt@centraldecatur.org)

Trevor Miller, superintendent  
IKM-Manning & Exira-EHK CSDs  
[tmiller@ikm-manning.k12.ia.us](mailto:tmiller@ikm-manning.k12.ia.us)

Joe Stutting (SAI president-elect, see above)

#### NAESP State Rep.

Rick Varney, elementary principal  
Decorah Community School District  
[rick.varney@decorah.k12.ia.us](mailto:rick.varney@decorah.k12.ia.us)

#### NASSP State Coordinator

Cindy Barwick, middle school principal  
Sheldon Community School District  
[cbarwick@sheldon.k12.ia.us](mailto:cbarwick@sheldon.k12.ia.us)

### SAI Staff

#### Administrative Assistant

Megan Mertes  
[mmertes@sai-iowa.org](mailto:mmertes@sai-iowa.org)

#### Communications Director

Tracy Harms  
[tharms@sai-iowa.org](mailto:tharms@sai-iowa.org)

#### Executive Director

Dr. Lisa Remy  
[lremy@sai-iowa.org](mailto:lremy@sai-iowa.org)

#### Finance Director

Debbie Wrenn  
[dwrenn@sai-iowa.org](mailto:dwrenn@sai-iowa.org)

#### Government Relations Director

Dave Daughton  
[ddaughton@sai-iowa.org](mailto:ddaughton@sai-iowa.org)

#### Legal Services Director

Matt Carver, J.D.  
[mcarver@sai-iowa.org](mailto:mcarver@sai-iowa.org)

#### Professional Learning Director

Dr. Dana Schon  
[dschon@sai-iowa.org](mailto:dschon@sai-iowa.org)

#### Program Coordinator

Amy Swanson  
[aswanson@sai-iowa.org](mailto:aswanson@sai-iowa.org)

### School Administrators of Iowa

12199 Stratford Drive, Clive, IA 50325-8146  
515-267-1115

[sai-iowa.org](http://sai-iowa.org)



## The power of professional coaching for school administrators

As we navigate the ever-evolving education landscape in Iowa, I'm reflecting on a powerful tool that has been transforming not only educational leadership but also leadership in all sectors: executive coaching. It's a practice that has gained tremendous recognition for its ability to unlock untapped potential and drive professional growth. I'll offer these insights from three key resources I have been reading — *Coaching Leaders*, *Co-Active Coaching*, and *Becoming a Professional Life Coach* — that highlight the benefits of executive coaching and how it can enhance our roles as educational leaders.

**1. Unlocking Potential** - Authors Daniel White and Marshall Goldsmith in their book *Coaching Leaders* emphasize the transformative power of coaching in helping leaders reach their full potential. For school administrators, this is a critical point. As leaders, we have a profound impact on our educational institutions, our staff, and most importantly, the students we serve. By investing in our growth through executive coaching, we can ensure that we are continuously evolving, learning, and improving.

Coaching provides a safe and structured space to explore our strengths and areas for improvement. It offers a valuable external perspective that can help us see our blind spots, uncover hidden talents, and develop a more profound understanding of our leadership style. With these insights, we can lead more effectively and inspire those around us.

**2. Collaborative Growth** - In *Co-Active Coaching* by Henry Kimsey-House, Karen Kimsey-House, Phillip Sandahl, and Laura Whitworth, the concept of co-active coaching is central. Co-active coaching emphasizes a collaborative relationship between coach and coachee, focusing on the coachee's agenda and growth objectives. This model is particularly powerful in educational leadership because it encourages a leadership style that values collaboration, empathy, and active listening — all qualities that resonate with our core mission as educators.

Co-active coaching helps leaders develop their emotional intelligence, empowering them to relate more effectively to their teams, students, and broader educational communities. By applying co-active coaching principles, we can create a more inclusive and empowering educational environment.

**3. Gaining Coaching Skills** - *Becoming a Professional Life Coach* by Patrick Williams and Diane S. Menendez offers a focus on developing coaching skills. While the book is aimed at those pursuing a career in coaching, the principles it offers are invaluable to anyone in a leadership role. As school administrators, we often find ourselves in mentoring, guiding, and coaching positions. Acquiring coaching skills equips us to be more effective mentors and guides to our staff and students, fostering their growth and development.

By incorporating coaching techniques into our leadership toolkit, we can create a more nurturing and empowering educational environment that values personal and professional growth.

Executive coaching is not just a passing trend; it's a powerful tool that can transform educational leadership. I'm happy to announce the **SAI Leadership Coaching Program — Unlocking Potential**. Professional Learning Director Dana Schon and I have been participating for the past year in the FranklinCovey Executive Coach Training Program which is an International Coaching Federation Accredited Program. We are excited to bring coaching to you.

I encourage you to explore the SAI Leadership Coaching program information linked above and consider how it can benefit your professional journey as an educational leader. Professional coaching offers a multitude of benefits that can significantly impact your leadership, communication, well-being, decision-making, and overall effectiveness in your role. By unlocking your potential, fostering collaboration, and developing coaching skills, you can not only enhance your leadership but also contribute to creating a positive and thriving educational environment for the entire school community.

Wishing you continued success in your leadership role, and as always, thank you for your dedication to the students and educators of Iowa.



## In Brief October Rep Council highlights

- Executive Director involvement with Team Up for Sports Safety committee and Healthy Kids Act Nutrition Advisory;
- Visits to AEA superintendent meetings;
- Financials and membership review;
- Mentoring and Induction, Conference and professional learning updates;
- SAI coaching program introduction;
- National Principals Month and Administrator of the Year status;
- Fall Legal Lab;
- IPERS is currently 90.3% funded and no increase is anticipated next year;
- Legislative activity overview of priority development, AEAs, IASB and SAI Day on the Hill, legislator visits to schools; and
- Executive Committee learning component using *No Ego* by Cy Wakeman.

## In Memoriam

**Marvin Judkins** - retired superintendent, Centerville (10-23-23)



## SAI District Meetings

District Meetings are being scheduled in each SAI District for the 2023-24 year. Prairie Lakes leads off December 5 and Green Hills follows December 6. Remaining districts will have meetings beginning in 2024. Register or check additional dates at [bit.ly/SAIevents](https://bit.ly/SAIevents).

## Legislative notes

from Dave Daughton, government relations director ✉

As we move into November, we have elections coming up next week. We know that some of you have some angst for what that might mean to you. My best advice would be to stay the course and keep doing what is right for kids, while at the same time complying with laws and regulations, and then developing relationships with and educating your new board members.

The SAI Legislative Committee will present its priorities to the Executive Committee and Representative Council this month, and we will publish them once approved. The draft version is similar to last year's but there are some changes.

The meetings I have had with legislators this past month have been very encouraging, in that I believe they have an understanding of where we are coming from with our issues. Those will continue this month, and hopefully we can make some headway as to what will happen in the session.

The Executive Leaders meeting was productive and we had some great discussion of potential solutions for our staff shortages. Now we need to summarize those conversations and work them into our conversations with legislators. By the way, great work from the SAI staff that made Executive Leaders a success.

As always, contact me with any questions at [ddaughton@sai-iowa.org](mailto:ddaughton@sai-iowa.org).

## Call for SAI VP candidates

If you're an SAI member who is a secondary principal (generally defined as having primary supervisory responsibilities for any combination of grades 7-12) wishing to expand your leadership experience and serve your profession, consider running for SAI vice president for 2024-25.

The position is rotated annually among elementary, general and secondary administrators. The vice president begins a four-year commitment to the SAI Executive Committee and moves through the chairs. Meetings are typically held monthly on a Wednesday.

Communicate your interest in running for office to **Lisa Remy** by Dec. 1. Additional information and application requirements (due Dec. 31) are available at [sai-iowa.org/sai-vp-application.cfm](https://sai-iowa.org/sai-vp-application.cfm).

## Calendar of events

### November

27-28 - Four Essential Roles of Leadership® with Evaluator Approval in Bettendorf

### December

- 5 - SAI Prairie Lakes District Meeting
- 6 - SAI Green Hills District Meeting
- 7 - The Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX) Organizational Approach (w/FranklinCovey)

Register and find more information at [bit.ly/SAIevents](https://bit.ly/SAIevents)

## Iowa Dept. of Ed. deadlines

Use this link to access critical due dates: [bit.ly/DEdeadlines](https://bit.ly/DEdeadlines)

## sai REPORT

The *SAI Report* is published for association members and select community and business leaders by School Administrators of Iowa. The views expressed in the *SAI Report* do not necessarily reflect SAI opinion nor does acceptance of advertising imply SAI endorsement.

Your comments and suggestions are welcomed.

Tracy J. Harms, editor



## FAQ for books: The sequel

George Lucas. George Smucas. It was three years before he released a sequel to “Star Wars.” Ha, George Lucas, I laugh in your general direction. It has taken me a mere two months to come back with a sequel to my previous guidance on potentially banned books, as found in our September newsletter. Now perhaps Lucas released numerous “Star Wars” sequels and prequels because of the overwhelming success of his films, and I might possibly be back due to the inadequacy of my own work, but that is just a minor detail, which doesn’t require further exploration.

A long time ago, in a school district far, far away, a great adventure took place. School administrators, facing civil confusion and unrelenting pondering of new legislation, sought additional guidance regarding what books to ban and what books not to ban. In this era of chaos and near delirium, a new hope arose from a remote, nondescript building in Clive, Iowa. There, a middle-aged reader of the ancient and not-so-ancient law used the force to channel legal guidance to the ever-wandering (and often wondering) school administrators as they navigate the unrelenting struggle between right and screwing up... Duh DAH, duh duh duh DAH DUH, duh duh duh duh DAH DUH, duh duh duh duh duh. Sorry, just geeking out a bit. I will start with my previous comments from my September column and then go from there.

### What books must be listed as we compile our list of books for parents/guardians and the community?

You only need to list books from the school’s library. If you use the public library in your community, those books do not need to be listed, nor do books located in the classroom or used in class, unless they are checked out from the school’s library.

### What standard is used to remove books from the library or otherwise ensure books are not available to students?

The books must be age-appropriate and may not include visual or descriptive depictions of sex, as defined in **Iowa Code §702.17**. For many students in middle school or high school, the mere reference of a sex act by name, would NOT be a violation, but very well would be a violation in elementary school. For instance, imagine that a character in a book states to another character in the book that they had sex last night. That would NOT be a violation to older students. However, if the same character describes the sex act, then that book should not be located in any school library or used in any classroom, regardless of permission. While the reference merely to an act would not be a violation for older students, it is still my encouragement that educators share with parents/guardians that the book will be used, so those parents/guardians might decide to request an alternate book or assignment. Since this permission is not required, passive consent may be used in this scenario.

### May we require an educator to remove a book from their classroom, even if they are not using it in class?

Yes. Unless the educator is keeping the book in a locked drawer or closed bag, making the book unavailable to students, school administrators have authority to require the educator to remove the book from the building, even if it is not used for instruction.

### How is age-appropriate defined in the law?

“Age-appropriate” means topics, messages, and teaching methods suitable to particular ages or age groups of children and adolescents, based on developing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacity typical for the age or age group. “Age-appropriate” does not include any material with descriptions or visual depictions of a sex act as defined in section 702.17.” (Iowa Code §256.11(19)).

### What is a sex act under Iowa Code §702.17?

“The term ‘sex act’ or ‘sexual activity’ means any sexual contact between two or more persons by any of the following: 1. Penetration of the penis into the vagina or anus. 2. Contact between the mouth and genitalia or mouth and anus or by contact between the genitalia of one person and the genitalia or anus of another person. 3. Contact between the finger, hand, or other body part of one person and the genitalia or anus of another person, except in the course of examination or treatment by a person licensed pursuant to chapter 148, 148C, 151, or 152. 4. Ejaculation onto the person of another. 5. By use of artificial sexual organs or substitutes therefore in contact with the genitalia or anus. 6. The touching of a person’s own genitals or anus with a finger, hand, or artificial sexual organ or other similar device at the direction of another person.” (Iowa Code §702.17)

### So is any reference in a book to sexual intercourse, anal sex, oral sex, masturbation, or sexual stimulation, whether by a person or a sex toy automatically banned?

Again, no. While a district may certainly decide to ban such books or put a restriction on the ages of students who may read such books, or require parent/guardian permission prior to reading such books, the key is not whether there is any reference but rather if there is description or visual depiction of such sex acts.

### But when does a reference to a sex act become a prohibited description of a sex act?

On the topic of obscenity and pornography, Justice Potter Stewart famously wrote in his concurring opinion: “... I know it when I see it.” (*Jacobellis v. Ohio* 378 U.S. 184 (1984)). With that thinking in mind, I encourage you to consider that you will “know it when you read it” when a reference to a sex act becomes a prohibited description of a sex act. No, I am not trying to be difficult or unhelpful. Is the author writing in such a steamy matter that leaves no room for imagination or interpretation? Is the author filling in the details for you in a manner that leads to reading of the text to appear more akin to something out of a pornography site or old Playboy magazine article? Let’s take sex out of the topic for a minute. Consider the following scenario. Imagine that descriptions of fishing are prohibited instead of sex. Now, with that in mind, please consider the text from two books.



In this example, fishing is undoubtedly referenced, and it even mentions a specific act (casting a net into the water). However, each of us likely had a very different version of Mortimus and the casting of the net in our mind.

Book 2 – His attire, patched and stained from years of use, was fitting on Mortimus, a burly sixty-year-old fisherman, whose skin was as wrinkly and weathered as his rugged coat. Picking up the net with his grease-stained, muscular hands, Mortimus cast it over the starboard side of his trusty fishing boat, “The Redemption.”

OK former English teachers out there, please don’t send me a letter grade. I’m just doing my best to make a point. Book 2, in my legal opinion, would cross the line and serve as a description of fishing, while Book 1 would not. Thus, all schools would be required to ban Book 2 or remove that portion of Book 2 from the work but would have some liberty as to whether or not to remove Book 1.

However, back to my early discussion of age-appropriate work, many if not all schools might decide to pull Book 1 from elementary school shelves, as elementary students may not be mature enough to understand even references to fishing. Whether in elementary school or even middle school, I would ask if a typical student would be confused by a mere reference to something in a book. If those students are likely to walk up to the teacher and ask: “What does that mean?” then I would seriously question whether the book is age-appropriate.

### What about the classics? Do we pull those as well?

While there is not a classics exception in the law, as there is for religious texts, such as the Bible or the Koran, I have repeatedly read quotes from legislators and Governor Reynolds that classic works were not intended to be banned. As such, while districts might certainly decide to remove classic works, it is my opinion that a vast majority of works that have been in your libraries for decades are OK to stay on the shelves, at least at your middle schools and high schools. Did you read a book in an Iowa high school 10, 20, or 30 years ago? If so, that would be a reasonable guide, based on the apparent legislative intent. From my reading, and interviews of legislators and the Governor, the intent seems to focus on literature that is more pornographic in nature or promotes sexual activity to students who have not advanced beyond sixth grade.

Finally, keep in mind that school districts and educators will receive a warning if state education officials later determine that a school or educator kept a book on the shelves, or used a book in class curriculum that should have been banned.

Who knows if this discussion will turn into a legal column trilogy? We will have to wait and see.

---

## Superintendent of the Year

*cont’d from page 1*

leadership growth, pushing me to think creatively, adapt, and develop resilience. These experiences not only help me develop new skills but also increase my capacity to empathize and understand the people I lead.

I’m an avid reader, and I believe that literature has the power to expand one’s horizons and deepen their understanding of the world. I am intentional about my reading choices, making sure to explore a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. By reading authors from different backgrounds and cultures, I aim to broaden my perspective and challenge my assumptions. This is crucial for a leader, as it helps me make more informed, empathetic, and inclusive decisions.

Here are some of the books that have profoundly influenced my thinking and enhanced my leadership abilities:

1. *Onward* by Elena Aguilar: This book provides invaluable insights into educational leadership and how to navigate the complexities of the field. It has helped me develop a more effective leadership style in the context of education.
2. *I’m Still Here* by Austin Channing Brown: This memoir explores issues of race and identity, challenging me to confront my own biases and cultivate a deeper understanding of racial dynamics in our society.
3. *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson: Wilkerson’s text is eye-opening. It has made me acutely aware of the inequalities that persist and has inspired me to advocate for a more just and equitable society.
4. *Most Likely to Succeed* by Tony Wagner and Ted Dintersmith: This book delves into the transformation of education in the digital age, emphasizing the need for innovation and adaptability in our educational systems. It has influenced my leadership in the realm of education and innovation.
5. *Street Data* by Jamila Dugan and Shane Safir: This book sheds light on the power of data-driven decision-making in education. It has sharpened my ability to use data effectively to drive positive change and improvement in educational settings.
6. *The Person You Mean to Be* by Dolly Chugh: Chugh’s work on becoming a better person and leader by addressing biases and promoting inclusivity has been instrumental in my growth as a leader committed to equity and diversity.
7. *What Happened to You?* by Oprah Winfrey and Bruce D. Perry: This book delves into trauma and resilience, offering insights into how leaders can support individuals who have experienced adversity. It has deepened my understanding of trauma-informed leadership.
8. *I Am My Mother’s Wildest Dream: How an African Teen Broke Her Silence and Fought Cultural Norms to Live the American Dream* by Nyajouk T. Doluony: This book, written by a friend and expert on supporting immigrant students, is a must-read for administrators. It offers valuable insights into supporting the unique needs of immigrant students, fostering inclusion, and overcoming cultural barriers.

My commitment to growth as a leader extends to both experiential learning through challenging situations and the continuous consumption of diverse literature. These practices have enriched my leadership style, broadened my perspective, and deepened my commitment to creating positive change in the world. The recommended books have played a significant role in shaping my leadership philosophy, and I believe they can benefit other leaders seeking to evolve and make a positive impact in their respective fields.

*This article is intended only as a reference in regard to the subject matter covered. It is furnished with the understanding that SAI is not engaged in rendering legal advice. If a legal opinion is desired, private legal counsel should be consulted.*



### 6 strategies for diffusing emotion and engaging in more productive conversations

I have always enjoyed civilized, respectful, and rigorous debate — the kind where at the end, even when you may not have reached agreement, you walk away with your integrity and dignity intact. The shared mindset is win-win, and people are willing to compromise for the greater good. In those discussions, emotions can still run high because people feel so strongly about the issue, but the trust and respect the parties have for each other allow for the processing of the emotions in healthy and productive ways. Unfortunately, such communication seems less and less common. Conversations that begin with a seemingly innocuous question can advance quickly into conflict and opposition exemplified in the following:

Person A: Do you prefer steak or seafood?

Person B: Steak.

Person A: You don't like seafood?

Person B: Yes, I like seafood, but I prefer steak.

Person A: Why don't you like seafood? I love seafood. Why are you against pescatarians?

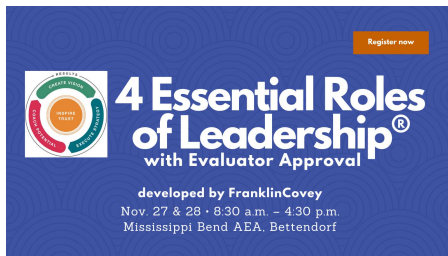
Like Person B, we find ourselves being thrust, unfairly and erroneously, on one side or another. We respond with authenticity to a question and unwittingly lose our stand on middle ground to someone else's perception that we must either like this or that, be either this or that. The quick trip up the ladder of inference is often accompanied by escalating emotions that fuel the division and lead to polarization. Many have begun to see the world through this dichotomous lens of either/or. We've lost sight of the complexity and nuances surrounding nearly any decision or choice we make. We've forgotten the possibility inherent in a both/and view. How can we respond in the midst of division and polarity?

Though these six strategies won't guarantee peace and love among all community members and they aren't new, together they can support you in diffusing intense emotions and engaging in more productive conversations.

1. **Listen.** Set aside the voice in your head and any previous experience with this person and seek to understand their perspective. Really listen. What is at the heart of their position? What is the story under the story?
2. **Validate.** Give the person your undivided attention. Let them know you have heard them and understand them. You might reflect on what they've said, or summarize what you've heard. Perhaps, you acknowledge a value they hold. "You're really concerned about your tax rate and don't want to spend any more money." Validation is NOT about agreeing with someone or condoning their behavior; it's about communicating that you see and hear them. Pause after you offer a validation so it can sink in. (Count to 10).
3. **Be the energy you need.** Situations escalate because one person matches another person's energy. Avoid catching the energy of whatever intense emotion the other person is experiencing. Stay neutral. Take a deep breath (or three!). In an especially heightened moment where no meaningful discussion is likely to occur, call for a break and reschedule.
4. **Anchor into your district vision, values, and mission.** Ask questions that prompt the person to consider how their position aligns to the work of the district. How does what they want or don't want fit into the articulated vision? What would this mean for each student in the district?
5. **Know your position (especially around potentially controversial issues).** What do you stand for? What do you want? Why? What story or stories support your position (what is the experience of student/s)? What do you want from the conversation? Knowing your position reduces the likelihood you get caught off guard.
6. **Find common ground.** "I think we agree on XXX." "Let's talk about what we agree on." How might this be a both/and opportunity?

***"The quick trip up the ladder of inference is often accompanied by escalating emotions that fuel the division and lead to polarization."***

Though you may really want to persuade someone to change their view or their mind, most perspectives aren't changed as the result of a single conversation. Your outcome for any conflict-based encounter might be to diffuse the emotion and pave the way for future discussion. Ideally, you stimulate thinking by asking the kinds of questions that spark dissonance for that other person and cause them to reflect such that the next time you connect, the conversation sounds just a little bit different.



## Four Essential Roles of Leadership® with Evaluator Approval

Nov. 27–28, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Mississippi Bend AEA, Bettendorf

**additional dates & locations available**

The world is changing at an unprecedented pace. Every day, leaders are making countless decisions and facing problems they've never encountered before. What worked yesterday can change overnight. The speed is relentless, the stakes are high, but the rewards are great for those who can lead a team to consistently achieve extraordinary results.

So how can leaders stay ahead of the curve and differentiate themselves and their teams when so much is changing so quickly? MEET THE 4 ESSENTIAL ROLES OF LEADERSHIP® (developed by FranklinCovey)

Even in the most turbulent times, there are four roles leaders play that are highly predictive of success:

1. Inspire Trust: Be the credible leader others choose to follow—one with both character and competence.
2. Create Vision: Clearly define where your team is going and how they are going to get there.
3. Execute Strategy: Consistently achieve results with and through others using disciplined processes.
4. Coach Potential: Unleash the ability of each person on your team to improve performance, solve problems, and grow their careers.

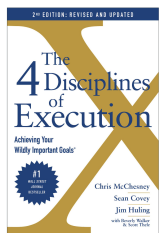
As you consider your participation, check out [this document](#) showing the general alignment of the 4 Essential Roles of Leadership® with the Iowa Standards for School Leaders.

**Licensure renewal credit:** Participants in this two-day workshop earn one licensure renewal credit that includes Evaluator Approval.

**Facilitator:** Dr. Dana Schon, SAI | **Register today:** <https://bit.ly/40nuHTO>

## The Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX) Organizational Approach (w/FranklinCovey)

Dec. 7 | 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. | SAI Office, Clive



The Four Disciplines of Execution teaches leaders how to help their teams execute on their highest priorities in the midst of the day-to-day whirlwind. Do you remember the last major initiative you watched die in your school or district? Did it go down with a loud crash? Or was it slowly and quietly suffocated by other competing priorities? By the time it finally disappeared, it's likely no one even noticed. What happened? The "whirlwind" of urgent activity required to keep things running day-to-day devoured the time and energy needed to execute your strategy for tomorrow! 4DX can change that! Create a culture of execution when you learn and embed these four disciplines into your school or district.

1. Focus on the Wildly Important
2. Act on the Lead Measures
3. Keep a Compelling Scoreboard
4. Create a Cadence of Accountability

**Licensure renewal credit:** [learn more.](#)

**Facilitator:** FranklinCovey consultant

**Register today:** <https://bit.ly/49hiMuu>

## WHAT OUR K-12 PARTNERS SAY ABOUT US:

*"Huge fan of Denovo."*

*"I trust them – plain and simple."*

*"With Denovo, they're able to give us guidance on all areas of planning and construction, not just one."*

*"Denovo understands the entire process of a facility improvement project from start to finish. I cannot tell you how much their expertise has helped me as a new superintendent."*



TEAMDENOVO.COM