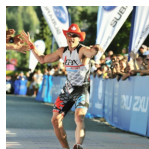




REPORT

Redefine the Impossible with SAI Annual Conference keynoter James Lawrence



Block off August 7 & 8 on your calendar for the 2024 SAI Annual Conference. On the first day, James "The Iron Cowboy" Lawrence's combination of energy, humor, determination, and achievements will captivate you and create an inspirational, emotional and awakening phenomenon. James is one of the most accomplished ultra-endurance athletes in the world, and he is the creator/CEO of the multi-million dollar Iron Cowboy brand. His expertise is in mindset, in helping people to reshape how they think so as to unlock more potential in all aspects of life: your profession, personal accomplishments, athletics, family, etc.

As an athlete he has been breaking records for years. In 2012, he completed 30 Iron-man triathlons (2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26.2 mile run) in one year. No one had ever done anything close to this. In 2015, he did the unimaginable, completing 50 Iron-man triathlons on 50 consecutive days in 50 different states while raising money to reduce childhood obesity. It was an amazing physical feat, an astounding logistics challenge and a fair bit of chaos, all at the same time. It was during this time that he launched the Iron Cowboy brand and laid the foundation for its future success.

While James is an astonishing athlete and a successful brand builder, he is primarily a master of mindset, focus and overcoming doubt and personal limits. He talks about the incredible power of hope and teamwork. He talks about accountability. He teaches people to remove excuses from their own lives in order to unlock their own unseen abilities. Whether speaking to a room full of C-suite leaders, an international sales team, or a finely tuned military group, James' expertise is in teaching people to change how they think in order to remove self-imposed limits.

Annual Conference registration will open in early May.

Annual Conference Call for Proposals deadline extended

For school leaders, it's been anything but a predictable start to the new year. As a result, the Call for Proposals deadline for the Promising Practices series at the SAI Annual Conference has been extended to February 23.

Promising Practices spotlight success stories and lessons learned in local districts across Iowa. 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, consider sharing your leadership with colleagues through a conference session!

Learn more about the process through these [Submission Guidelines](#) and submit a [proposal](#) by February 23, 2024!

Solutions to Issues Impacting Educators and School Districts

Devote 45 minutes Feb. 27 at 1 p.m. to learn how Horace Mann solutions can help employees get on a path to financial success and in turn help employers improve retention.

Horace Mann is a long-time SAI Corporate Partner and your partner in education. They've served the educational community for over 75 years and understand financial issues impacting educators and how those issues can affect school districts. Use [this link](#) to join the webinar.

Don't miss SAI's 30-day wellness program that begins February 15

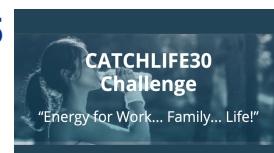
Sign up for this free program for SAI members providing self-care tools to manage stressors and refuel your energy for work, family and life.

How it works

Using videos, habit-building, accountability racking, reflective questions and friendly competition, the CatchLife30 Challenge offers everything you need to transform your health and wellness by making small, manageable changes. All communication will occur via daily text/email messages.

CatchLife30 features daily health check-ins that can be completed in five minutes or fewer and don't require a fitness tracker. There are five focus areas: hydration, physical activity, nutrition, social-emotional health and sleep.

Registration is open. Go to challenges.catchlife30.com and use access code SAI. Register as a first-time user regardless of whether you've participated in the past. Deadline to sign up is February 14, and the challenge begins February 15.



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We are in this together

Over the course of my career I have seen many instances of school administrators coming together in times of need; whether it is contributing to the teacher shortage white paper, proposed ESSA changes, pending legislative changes, calling a weather delay/cancellation or during times of tragedy. I am reminded of how often school administrators work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the safety and well-being of students, advocating for public education, and listening to staff, students, parents and community members.

In times of crisis, be it a severe weather event or a tragic incident, school administrators play a vital role in making tough decisions that impact the entire school community. One example, which happened frequently during the week of January 8, is deciding whether to call off school due to inclement weather. It may seem like a routine occurrence, but it requires careful consideration of various factors, including the safety of students and staff. I remember getting up early to listen to weather forecasts, look at road conditions, and then weigh the potential risks associated with keeping schools open. It was extremely helpful to have colleagues I could text or call to help inform my decision.

Another recent example of administrators coming together for Iowa students is in advocating for Iowa's Area Education Agencies. When administrators saw the bill and understood the proposed changes, you quickly started writing letters, sending emails, making phone calls or visiting the Capitol. It has made a difference. All of us need to consider how a specific piece of legislation will impact rural, suburban and urban districts. We have seen times when a specific piece of legislation may impact different sizes of districts differently. It was important then to support our colleagues and we need to continue to do so now. Your collective voice matters!

When bad things happen, like a disaster or a serious incident in the community or school, you really see administrators come together. Whether it's a natural disaster or something happening within the school, you all work together like a well-oiled machine to put emergency plans into action. You act fast to help students, families, and staff dealing with the crisis. It's all about teamwork in those tough times.

The resilience of school administrators is not just limited to crisis management. It extends to fostering a sense of community and support within the school environment. In times of need, administrators rally not only to address immediate concerns but also to provide ongoing emotional and logistical support.

It's important to acknowledge the countless hours spent in meetings, discussions, and planning sessions as you all come together for the greater good of the educational community. Your commitment to ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for students and staff is truly commendable.

As we all navigate the challenges that life throws our way, I want to take a moment to appreciate the dedication of each of you. Your unity, resilience, and unwavering commitment to your students, staff, school community and each other are admirable. Thank you for your support of each other and collaboration as you face each challenge.

Also remember, SAI is here to support, encourage and develop Iowa leaders. We are here to answer questions, provide resources, make connections and listen. We value bringing people together to exchange ideas, insights and grow networks. The SAI community creates a supportive network where Iowa administrators can navigate the complexities of their roles with collective wisdom.

Honoring a leader for his extraordinary sacrifice



A husband, a father, a grandfather, a teacher, a mentor, a leader. The person who said he always knew he wanted to be a teacher because he had great teachers he wanted to be like.

Perry High School Principal **Dan Marburger** is said to have "acted selflessly and placed himself in harm's way in an apparent effort to protect his students" during the tragic events of January 4.

SAI wishes to recognize Mr. Marburger for his years as a school leader and his sacrifice in service of students and staff. He has been credited by students for his support for all students and as a leader who wanted to see them succeed.

For those who may not have had an opportunity to meet Dan Marburger, his spirit is captured in the words of former colleague Jim Richmond, "Dan's heart was so big that every person that he touched, that every person that he met, his heart touched them and his heart lives inside of them."

Let us also commend the efforts of the leadership, staff, students, law enforcement, first responders and the community. They were there to help and will continue to be there as the Perry community comes back together and moves forward with hope.

In Brief



January Executive Committee activity

- Newly created investment policy statement addressed;
- Membership numbers and review of financials;
- Annual Conference planning and professional learning opportunities;
- Transition to new Association Management System and website update;
- Federal Court decision on SF 496;
- Legislative activity; and
- Learning component using Cy Wakeman's *Life's Messy, Live Happy*.

Legislative notes

from Dave Daughton, government relations director ✉

The first month of the legislative session has been interesting, to say the least. We entered January with the hope that we would have great conversations about finding ways to improve the teacher shortage, expand funding for Pre-K programs, develop some improved mental health services for kids, etc. Unfortunately, very little has even been started/discussed on any of those fronts. I would estimate that at least 90% of the time has been spent working on the AEA portion of the governor's matching bills. The status of those bills as of February 1 is as follows:

House – Held a subcommittee January 31 and did not move it forward. This particular bill is considered dead in the House.

Senate – Held a subcommittee on Wednesday and passed it out to the committee on a 2-1 vote. Both Senator Evans and Senator Rozenboom stated that it would be with amendments and talked about how it would need significant changes.

A word of caution (VERY IMPORTANT): Do not take the statement of the bill being dead in the House at face value. There will likely be another bill in the House that will deal with AEAs. It could be passed over from the Senate or a new bill may surface. The efforts of many helped us get the result we did and that needs to continue. This will not disappear. Stay engaged.

The other 10% of the time has been spent attending subcommittees on several "smaller bills," and there have been a lot. School start date, open enrollment deadline, operational sharing, reading instruction, and many other topics. A Pre-K bill providing full funding for children at the poverty level did get out of committee and that is encouraging.

We have a lot of work to do and the first funnel date is closer than we think. Reflect on the **SAI priorities** as you advocate within your community. Also, a reminder that SAI will co-host the Day on the Hill February 13. We are collaborating with IASB and the AEAs, and have designed learning sessions as well as will have 20 school district displays/presentations for legislators to view. Make sure you have this date on your calendar and **register** by February 9 if you plan to attend.

Check out the **Iowa Legislature link** and learn to navigate that if you want lots of details. Otherwise, see my weekly Friday updates that have several details.

Keep your attitude positive and have a great February.

Calendar of events

February

7 - Day on the Hill Pre-Training: State of the Budget - virtual

12 & 13 - Day on the Hill events

15 - School Law Conference - virtual

28 & 29 - Four Essential Roles of Leadership® with Evaluator Approval, Avoca

March

21 & 22 - Women in Educational Leadership Conference

26 - SAI Keystone District Meeting

Register and find more information at bit.ly/SAIevents

Iowa Dept. of Ed. deadlines

Use this link to access critical due dates: bit.ly/DEdates

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



Student placement: Don't mess around with Jim

I recently came across a bootleg copy of once-proposed lyrics for Jim Croce's classic "You Don't Mess Around with Jim." Croce, once a prospective school administrator, initially wrote: "You don't tug on Superman's cape, you don't spit into the wind, you don't pull the mask off the old Lone Ranger, and you don't mess around with a student's educational placement or instruction within your district." Although suiting his passion for education at that time, a producer convinced him to change the last phrase in the lyrics to "you don't mess around with Jim," and the rest is history. Now, if you Googled whether Jim Croce was ever a prospective school administrator, I have some land in Louisiana I would like to sell you. However, my slightly embellished bootleg lyrics story is reminiscent of some wisdom I heard from a retired superintendent during my first years at SAI: "If you want to see some emotional parents, try closing an elementary school or changing elementary school boundaries." Bottom line, parents are often passionate about where their students are educated.

So what does this have to do with this month's column?! I frequently receive calls from not only superintendents but building principals at all levels about their authority to educate a student in another location or educational setting. Other times, the issue is similar, except the question relates to whether a parent may demand that their child be moved to another classroom or another building. Before we get into a few scenarios, I would like to share some often forgotten, but extremely important subsections in the Iowa Code, which relate to the district's authority to determine where and how each student is educated.

General rules — bonds of employees. 1. The board shall make rules for its own government and that of the directors, officers, employees, teachers and pupils, and for the care of the schoolhouse, grounds, and property of the school corporation, and shall aid in the enforcement of the rules, and require the performance of duties imposed by law and the rules. . . (Iowa Code §279.8(1))

Number of schools — attendance — terms — classroom assignment. 1. The board of directors shall determine the number of schools to be taught, divide the corporation into such wards or other divisions for school purposes as may be proper, determine the particular school which each child shall attend, and designate the period each school shall be held beyond the time required by law. (Iowa Code §279.11(1) (emphasis added))

Now, many superintendents are likely familiar with the first subsection listed, as it is a catchall section that underlies the board's authority to create policies to govern the district. However, the second subsection shared does not receive the attention it deserves. This subsection reminds schools of their authority to determine where students are educated. With these sections in mind, let's dive into a number of scenarios.

Scenario 1 – A compulsory-age general education student pulls out a knife at school and swipes at another student, fortunately not injuring them. The district administration wishes to take a strong stand but is wondering about the district's responsibilities since the student is of compulsory age.

For general education students, the Iowa Code includes no provision requiring the district to provide instruction if a student is expelled or suspended due to misbehavior. As such, at a very technical level, the student might be expelled or long-term suspended and the district would have no responsibility to provide instruction. In some such situations, the family then looks to provide private instruction or other nonpublic or online schooling.

Having shared this, despite the ultimate responsibility falling on the family or guardians if a student receives situation discipline, I appreciate that many districts understand that the student is likely coming back to your schools at some point and you wish to continue that student's education while they are away from your building. As such, the administration might want to negotiate with the family so they agree for the student to receive online instruction through the district for some period of time, whether the student will receive that instruction at home or in a room somewhere within your district. What might this process look like?

A student does something that is clearly deserving of significant discipline and the parents/guardians understand this. The administration might remind the family of this fact but offer to provide instruction in an alternative manner if the family agrees to a long-term suspension or other instruction and waives the hearing before the board for long-term suspension. In lieu of going through all of the work and time that a board hearing entails, the administration could then take that agreement to the next board meeting and discuss it with the board in closed session (of course, there would be an agenda item for STUDENT Jane Doe). After discussing the agreement briefly in closed session, the board could come out of closed session and vote to ratify the agreement.

Scenario 2 – A general education elementary student is causing all kinds of issues in a particular elementary classroom and the student's parent/guardian is being equally disruptive with the student's classroom teacher. May the district decide to move the student to another classroom or even another building, even if the parent/guardian disagrees?

Yes, while educators will want to consider whether doing so will cause even more issues with this family, you have the authority to not only move the student to another classroom within the building but even to another building, despite the fact that the family might not live within the boundaries of that attendance center. Transportation is likely to become a related issue with a move to another building and you might want to give extra thought to providing transportation in that situation, even if you are not statutorily required to do so.

Scenario 3 – Same as scenario 2, except the parents demand their student be moved to another classroom or building, and the district is not inclined to do so. Are you required to make this move?

Probably not, but it depends. If the reason for the move is simply that the parents/guardians do not get along with the teacher or are overly critical of the teacher's abilities, then the answer is no. However, some factual scenarios may require such a move if there is founded bullying or the move relates to moving into, or out of, a classroom with a sibling, the student is K-5, and the parent's request meets the requirements of Iowa Code §279.11. Parents might also move their student if the school is determined to be "persistently dangerous" under ESSA.

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.

Scenario 4 – A general education student is having significant attendance issues in the traditional school format and/or the student is regularly causing disciplinary issues at school, albeit none of those issues would rise to the level of long-term suspension. May educators move this student to an alternative form of instruction, whether within the current school building or outside the current building?

As long as administrators/educators are able to show that the district is providing the student with the necessary coursework to matriculate through the district's programs and graduate, or receive instructional courses required under Iowa law at a reasonable pace, then the answer is yes. This student is clearly not succeeding under the district's typical programming and schedule, as shown by the student's attendance and behavior, so educators should feel confident and comfortable moving forward with a plan that might better fit the student's interests and current level of focus. At times this might include more online instruction. Other situations might call for the student to attend an alternative school or participate more in programs relating to interests, such as particular trades or work programs.

Scenario 5 – So, what about special education students in any of the above situations?

While it would probably take an extra column to go over all of the details, I will do my best to cover some important considerations when the student has an IEP.

If the issue is one of discipline, remember that you have 10 school days during the course of the school year to potentially suspend the student or change their setting without needing a manifestation determination or needing to provide instruction. Of course, you might decide to provide instruction, even if it is not required.

If the discipline will take the student beyond 10 days of suspension during the school year, then you will need to do a manifestation determination. If the behavior is a manifestation, then you may not discipline further but should address issues in the student's IEP. If the behavior is *not* a manifestation, then educators will need to ensure that the matter goes before the school board and there is a hearing if the current disciplinary issue relates to a suspension of more than 10 school days. Any discipline causing the student to be suspended for more than 10 school days during a school year will require the district to provide instruction during that time.

Remember that certain behavior (e.g., possessing or selling drugs, possessing certain weapons, etc.) allows for a 45-day alternative placement without the need for a manifestation determination or hearing before the school board.

Consider approaching the issues through an IEP team as a Least Restrictive Environment or a matter of determining the best plan for a particular student. In such situations, the IEP team, hopefully with parent/guardian approval (although that is not required), might determine that another setting, schedule or plan of instruction is best for a particular student. Perhaps the current setting is triggering the student for some reason or providing too many distractions or disruptions for the student and they are not adequately moving toward their goals.

Well, I know we have covered a good deal of ground, but I wanted to remind administrators of the significant authority districts have to educate students, including the manner and location of that instruction.

Stay well and Go Cubs Go!!!

School Law Conference - virtual event Feb. 15 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Hear Iowa's leading education attorneys cover:

- Behavior Issues and Legal Implications
- Federal Laws (Fair Labor Standards Act, IDEA, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX, Title I, etc.) and Compliance
- Open Enrollment, Residency and Transportation
- Administrator Contracts and Termination and common administrator disciplinary issues.

Participants will also receive a legislative update.

Register: bit.ly/SAIevents



Women in Educational Leadership Conference West Des Moines Marriott

Thurs., March 21 - 5 - 8:30 p.m.

5 - Dinner & networking
5:30 - Think Better, Feel Better, Live Better with Staci Danford
8:30 - Adjourn

Fri., March 22 - 8 - 11:30 a.m.

8 - Continental breakfast
8:30 - From Armor to Grounded Confidence: The Making of a Daring Leader with Lisa Brouwer
11:30 - Adjourn

Register: bit.ly/SAIevents





Leadership coaching for personalized growth

"Create a broader base. Get lower. Don't let that girl muscle her way in front of you! Get your hand up! You have to command the ball in that post position!" Words shouted by both my high school and college basketball coaches so many years ago still echo in my mind when I see similar coach and post player interaction in games I watch today. I would imagine today's players receive coaching in much the same way I did. My coaches observed me and then provided feedback to "fix" or "tweak" my stance, my shooting form, my running form, and any other skill or play where I wasn't doing what they wanted. Born from these experiences was my early mental model of coaching: coaching was about "fixing." Undoubtedly, these coaches were helping me to up-level my game, to get better; and I valued their feedback. I had positive, rewarding relationships with my coaches. And, I came to believe, almost subconsciously, that coaching was about fixing, about correcting a deficit or error.

Education, training, and experience have since challenged my original mental model of coaching. This new mental model reflects my expanded understanding of coaching at a much deeper, richer level. I recognize more clearly the multiple connotative definitions of coaching that each of us brings to conversations about it. Whether we've experienced coaching as an athlete, as an athletic coach, as a speech or drama coach or participant, as an instructional coach or teacher being coached, as part of mentoring or being mentored, or through executive leadership coaching, each of us has a unique perspective of what it means to coach or be coached. Oftentimes, however, we enter into conversations about coaching with an assumption that we all share the same understanding of what coaching is and why we might pursue it.

Over a decade ago, I encountered an article by famous surgeon **Atul Gawande** in which he shares his epiphany about why one might work with a coach, "Professional athletes use coaches to make sure they are as good as they can be. But doctors don't. ... why did I find it inconceivable to pay someone to come into my operating room and coach me on my surgical technique?" His words prompted me to surface and examine my beliefs about coaching and to recognize that coaching was not limited to the arena of activities and athletics, but had a place among professionals as a way to improve practice. Not only that, the best of the best were championing coaching as a way to level up their work.

More recently, I have been engaged in an executive coach training program accredited through the **International Coaching Federation**, the gold standard of coaching. Through this experience, I have grown even more so in my understanding of the purpose and value of leadership coaching, in particular, and the nuances that separate this type of coaching from consulting, mentoring, and other forms of coaching with which I am familiar.

According to the ICF, "The process of [leadership] coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity and leadership as the leader pursues their goals." Leadership coaching is not about "fixing" anyone. Leadership coaching is not about giving feedback based on what the coach would do or has done. It's not about collaborating to determine a path forward, which distinguishes it from the kind of coaching that Gawande initially pursued.

Leadership coaching is about helping leaders build their expertise, enhance their leadership skills, amplify their impact and foster sustainable change within their building or district. This happens through a partnership between the leader and coach. The graphic on the right, adapted from a **Learning Forward article**, effectively summarizes the difference among several different types of support.

Various forms of coaching as well as other supports have a place in advancing the important work district and school leaders do. Leadership coaching specifically serves leaders who want to hone their skills for greater impact, increase their self-awareness, and process through the challenges and opportunities they face. You won't be commanding the ball, but you'll be up-leveling your leadership game!

Consult	Collaborate	Coach
I think	We think	You think
I process	We process	You process
I problem solve	We problem solve	You problem solve
I tell	We decide	You decide
IMPACT		
Dependence	Interdependence	Independence and Sustainability

If you're interested in leadership coaching, SAI now offers a Leadership Coaching Program. You can learn more from **this slidedeck** and **coaching flier**.