



REPORT

Cast your vote for SAI VP

An electronic ballot and information about the two candidates for SAI vice president were emailed April 1 to eligible voting members. Voting closes April 15.

Candidates for the position are:

- **Justin Colbert**, high school principal, Liberty High School, Iowa City CSD; and
- **Tim Felderman**, high school principal, West Delaware County CSD.

As a reminder, SAI officer positions are rotated annually among secondary, general administrator and elementary level leaders. Next year, general administrator (e.g., superintendent or central office administrator) candidates will be up for election. Consider an SAI leadership position in the future.

Emails will be sent this month to individuals eligible to serve in district officer roles. Then, let us know if you're interested!



Justin
Colbert

Tim
Felderman

Spring Legal Labs

Thurs., April 11 • 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. • virtual learning

Tues., April 16 • 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. • in-person at the SAI Office

Join SAI Legal Services Director Matt Carver and administrator colleagues as he covers pertinent Iowa Code, regulations and decisions relating to common school technology issues, as well as school attendance and truancy.

Participants will work through a series of scenarios with other colleagues to better understand each area of the law and what actions are best practice.

Register: sai-iowa.org/events

New SAI website launched

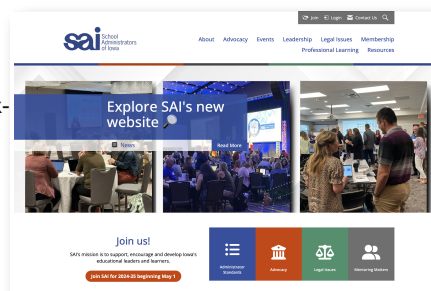
The SAI staff is excited to introduce you to the new website!

SAI's revamped site features a fresh look and updated technology to enhance your experience and better serve your needs.

To ensure you get the most out of your membership, you're asked to create a new login. Please note that your previous username and password will not work on the new website.

With your new login, you'll be able to:

- Register for events
- Update your member profile
- Track event attendance
- View/pay invoices
- Access members-only information, e.g., legal articles/resources and the *SAI Report*
- And more!



Creating your new login is simple:

- **Access this link.**

- Enter the email address you use for your SAI membership.
- You'll then be prompted to create a new password.

Once you're logged in, you'll be greeted by your Member Compass — SAI's new portal designed to streamline your experience. Don't forget to update your profile while you're there!

We're eager for the new website to enhance your user experience. Should you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to **the SAI staff**.

AP Week - April 1-5

Join NAESP, NASSP and SAI to recognize the significant role assistant principals, associate principals and deans of students play in the overall academic achievement of students nationwide. The organizations will honor the impact assistant principals have on the success of schools across the country. Find more info. on ways to celebrate at bit.ly/NAESPapweek and bit.ly/NASSPapweek.

FAFSA week of action is April 15-19

National FAFSA Week of Action, April 15-19, is designed to drive FAFSA submission among high school seniors.

Find resources at ed.gov/better-fafsa



SAI podcast spotlights mental wellness continuum of supports

Join SAI Executive Director Lisa Remy as she discusses the mental wellness continuum of supports implemented by the Harlan School District with Superintendent Jenny Barnett. This conversation will not only explore Harlan's successful strategies, but also equip you with valuable tips on finding additional resources to bolster student mental health in your own community. Learn more about creating a supportive school environment where students can thrive.

Listen now: sai-iowa.org/its-been-said-podcast

May is Mental Health Awareness month

Plan ahead with these resources from:

- Nami: bit.ly/NAMIMay
- AASA: <https://bit.ly/AASAJan24>

SAI Officers

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President-elect

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SAI Representative Council

Listed at sai-iowa.org/representative-council.cfm

National Representatives

AASA Governing Board Members

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Trevor Miller, superintendent
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Joe Stutting (SAI president-elect, see above)

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Spring: A season of reflection and growth

Spring symbolizes new growth and transformation. Spring is also a very busy time of year for schools with state testing, prom, graduation, multiple spring sports, planning for next school year and many other activities taking place. I always found spring to be a time to reflect on the journey traveled thus far and prepare for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. I believe reflection is a powerful tool in our work and have seen the benefits of reflection over my years in education.

Let's consider the meaning of reflection. The best definition I found on Google is as follows: Reflection is about taking the time to think about, meditate on, evaluate, and give serious thought to your behaviors, thoughts, attitudes, motivations, and desires.

In the article [How Self-Reflection Can Make You a Better Leader](#) by Harry M. Kraemer, he shares three ways that self-reflection can improve your leadership: know your priorities, minimize surprises and build stronger teams.

Know Your Priorities - and where you fall short. It is important as leaders to identify our priorities and then make sure they are top of mind each day. It is a mismatch when our calendars are filled with tasks that do not align with our priorities. Mr. Kraemer suggests daily reflection and even reaching out to colleagues to help hold you accountable.

Minimize Surprises - Minimizing surprises means being prepared, including trying to determine what could go wrong with the plan you have laid out. It is not always easy to consider/think about all possible scenarios. Time can be a limiting factor as well. I suggest working with others or having someone review your plans and see if they can identify something you may have overlooked.

Build Stronger Teams - Reflection is a good tool to use for your administrative team as well. As a leader, it is important to model the behavior you want from your team. Scheduling time for the team to reflect on progress toward priorities will only strengthen the team.

In Kraemer's article, he provides some powerful questions to use in your reflective practice. These questions not only help you dig deeper, they also promote reflecting on the good things happening. Educators often spend time reflecting on everything that didn't go as planned or what went wrong. It is just as important to take time to reflect on what is going well.

As leaders in our schools, it's essential to continuously cultivate our leadership skills and empower others to do the same. Let's take this opportunity to reflect on our leadership styles, identify areas for growth, and invest in our professional learning. Whether it's attending workshops, participating in mentorship programs, or engaging in reflective practice, let's commit to becoming the best leaders we can for our schools and communities.

Let's approach the spring with a sense of optimism, determination, and resilience. As you finish strong and thrive in the face of challenges throughout the remainder of the year, please remember the wise words of Brené Brown, "Regret is one of our most powerful emotional reminders that reflection, change, and growth are necessary. When used constructively, it's a call to courage and a path to wisdom."



Honoring milestone years of service and retirees

If you're reaching a milestone year of service (25, 30, 35 or 40 years in administration) or retiring at the end of this school year, SAI wants to honor you!

Sign up at bit.ly/3DpFscG.

In Brief



March Executive Committee highlights

- Presentation from SAI's new investment company Bral Niedert;
- Joint Day on the Hill review;
- Legislative activity;
- Equity Committee sample framework discussion;
- AASA National Conference on Education;
- Proposed ESSA accountability changes and member input;
- Membership, financials and preliminary budget draft available in April;
- Mentoring, Annual Conference planning and professional learning opportunities;
- Vice president candidates, "It's been SAId" podcast guests and Administrator of the Year selection.

In memoriam

Don Gunderson - retired superintendent, Dike-New Hartford and SAI past president, 1991-92 (3-13-24)

Marilyn Koehler - retired Moulton-Udell superintendent (3-20-24)



Generative AI for School Leaders April 25, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., SAI Office

This workshop introduces school leaders to Generative AI — a transformative technology that is poised to change teaching and learning. It goes beyond theory, offering hands-on experience with AI tools, and their application in innovative and engaging planning and teaching methods. Participants will also dive into the ethical implications of GenAI and best practices for building AI guidance.

Facilitator Amanda Bickerstaff is co-founder and CEO of AI for Education. A former high school biology teacher and EdTech executive with over 20 years of experience in the education sector, she has a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities that AI can offer.

Register: sai-iowa.org/events

Legislative notes

from Dave Daughton, government relations director ✉

Things were fairly slow in March, but then things went very fast. It proved to be a month in which the governor signed a single education bill. Of course that was House File 2612, of which you are all aware. You can look at the weekly reports and Legislative alerts to get more specific information on that bill, regarding SSA, teacher and staff compensation, and the AEAs. All of you have your thoughts about the bill, and you will agree or disagree with specific portions. Now, moving forward, we have to figure out what it means for districts, and how we can manage the impact of the legislation. Keep in mind that there may be some fixes or changes in standings or appropriations bills at the end of the session, as well as the input of the Task Force.

Also this month the DE Director confirmation process began. That is still ongoing and at some point will be brought to the Senate floor. Thirty votes are needed to confirm, and there are 34 Senate Republicans.

April 16 is the 100th day of the session and is scheduled to be the last day. Legislators have a lot left to do but can be very motivated when up against the clock. So, we shall see, but I have a hard time thinking they will be done by then.

Several education bills are on the "unfinished business" calendar, which means they can pull them up at any time. We have heard of a few that they may be working on and will update you as needed.

We are hopeful in a month this session will be behind us and that we will have made some progress on our legislative priorities.

The end of the school year is closer than you think. Do your best.

Calendar of events

April

- 11 - Spring Legal Lab - virtual learning
- 16 - Spring Legal Lab
- 18 - Central Rivers District Meeting
- 25 - Generative AI for School Leaders

June

- 6 - Beyond Compliance: From Investigation to Resolution
- 13 & 14 - Four Essential Roles of Leadership® with Evaluator Approval in Cedar Falls
- 26 & 27 - Four Essential Roles of Leadership® with Evaluator Approval in Clive

Register and find more information at sai-iowa.org/events

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



Teacher contracts and statutory rights

I understand you are all diligent and dedicated educators, but did any of you ever use Cliffs Notes back in college? For you administrators under the age of 35, Cliffs Notes were our AI equivalent in the '70s, '80s, and '90s. If you didn't "have time" (clearing throat) to read an assigned book, such as "War and Peace," then a not-so-diligent student might purchase the Cliffs Notes, and hope that the knowledge gained therein would get you by for the paper, class or exam. Now, unfortunately for me, the one time I attempted the Cliffs Notes route, my professor was one of those wise individuals who wrote his exam in such a way that the Cliffs Notes would get you nowhere. How does the saying go? "We sometimes have to learn lessons the hard way."

Well, luckily for all of you, this month's column will provide the Matts Notes for teacher contracts and rights under Iowa Code Chapter 279, and related rights to mentoring and induction and intensive assistance under Chapter 284.

Q: When may contracts be offered to teachers?

A: Employing boards may not offer a contract to teachers earlier than March 15. However, boards may, of course, offer contracts earlier if they are hiring a teacher new to the district. (Iowa Code §279.13)

Q: How long do teachers have to return an offered contract?

A: Teachers may not be required to return a signed contract or resign less than twenty-one (21) days after the contract has been offered. (Iowa Code §279.13)

Q: What is the maximum length of a teaching contract?

A: While nearly all teaching contracts under Chapter 279 are continuing contracts, meaning they automatically renew if no action is taken to terminate or not renew, they may be for a period of no longer than one year. I state nearly all, as there are provisions to provide a temporary contract of up to six months, in certain scenarios, as stated in Iowa Code §279.13 (e.g., to fill a spot vacant due to military leave). (Iowa Code §279.13)

Q: Which teachers are considered probationary?

A: The first three years of a teacher's employment in a district are probationary **UNLESS** the teacher has completed a three-year probationary period in another Iowa school district. If the teacher has completed a three-year probationary period in another Iowa district, then they are probationary for no longer than two years in a new district, unless that probationary period has been waived by the hiring district. As such, if a teacher keeps jumping to new districts every two years, and never completes a full three-year probationary period, then they start over in any new district and must complete the full three years. (Iowa Code §279.19)

Q: What are other considerations relating to probationary teachers?

A: While Iowa Code does not require contracts to state whether they are probationary or non-probationary, I highly encourage administrators to ensure that contract language is clear that a contract is still probationary or whether the district is waiving part or all of the probationary period for a teacher who has completed the three-year probationary period in another Iowa district. Keep in mind that districts DO NOT have authority to waive any part of the initial, three-year probationary period. The reason I encourage referencing the probationary period, even if doing so is not required, is that doing so will help to defend against a potential argument by a teacher that it was their understanding the district was waiving all or part of the probationary period when they were hired. (Iowa Code §279.19)

Q: May the probationary period be extended?

A: Yes, the probationary period may be extended for an additional year with the consent of the teacher. (Iowa Code §279.19)

Q: What is the process for terminating a probationary teacher's contract?

A: The process is different for probationary teachers, so please take note. In the case of probationary teachers, the board first votes to terminate the probationary teacher's contract at the end of the current contract year, and the superintendent or superintendent's designee must then give notice of the board's action to the probationary teacher no later than April 30. The notice must be in writing and hand-delivered or delivered by certified mail. Of course, perhaps the most significant difference with the termination of a probationary teacher's contract is that it may be done without showing "just cause." Having shared this, during the current teacher shortage crisis, it has been my experience that the vast majority of administrators who have contacted me about terminating a probationary teacher's contract would have had "just cause" to terminate, even though it was not statutorily required.

Q: What are some practical considerations if a district is considering termination of a probationary teacher's contract?

A: While it is not statutorily required, administrators should consider whether it makes sense to have a conversation with a probationary teacher about resignation before the board considers termination. If the teacher decides to resign, the central office should ensure that the resignation goes before the board with enough time so the board may accept the resignation allowing time to still terminate the teacher, as the teacher may always withdraw the resignation prior to board action. As another consideration, I encourage administrators to give the teacher notice if their position is an upcoming agenda item relating to the teacher's termination. Superintendents should remember that the board may not go into closed session to discuss the employee unless the employee has requested for the board to do so, or if there is a need to meet with district legal counsel about litigation.

Q: What are a probationary teacher's statutory rights if they receive written notice that the board voted to terminate their contract?

A: The probationary teacher has 10 days from receiving written notice to request a private conference with the board, but the protections under Iowa Code §279.15 and §279.16 do not apply. Again, this is a conference and not a hearing.

Q: Is there any direct connection between probationary teacher rights and beginning teacher licenses under Iowa Code Chapter 284?

A: No, other than the fact that all beginning teachers are also probationary teachers. Administrators should just look at this as the overlapping of two different things — contract rights and teacher licensure statutes and rules. All school districts or area education agencies shall provide teachers under a beginning license with at least a two-year mentoring and induction program. Upon the completion of the two-year program and a comprehensive evaluation, the district or AEA shall: 1) recommend the beginning teacher for a standard license, if the teacher meets the Iowa teaching standards; 2) recommend a third year of mentoring and induction if they believe the teacher is likely to meet the standards upon an additional year; or 3) communicate to the BoEE that the individual does not meet standards and should not be given a license or additional year of mentoring and induction. (Iowa Code §284.5)

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.

Q: May a district terminate a probationary teacher and still recommend a beginning teacher have an additional year of mentoring and induction, or approve the beginning teacher for a standard license?

A: Yes, this is often where the confusion comes into play. It is possible to terminate a probationary teacher and still recommend that the teacher receive a standard license or a third year of mentoring and induction. I often see this during situations in which the teacher is just not a good fit in a particular district. Perhaps the teacher got crosswise with some other teachers or would have a greater likelihood of success in a larger or smaller community or district. There are many reasons why a teacher may not succeed in one district but has a likelihood of success in another district or situation. (Iowa Code §284.5)

Q: Does a beginning teacher get credit for mentoring and induction they received in a past district if they are terminated or voluntarily choose to change districts?

A: YES. (Iowa Code §284.5)

Q: When and which teachers are placed on intensive assistance programs?

A: If a supervisor and/or evaluator determines at any time that a teacher, other than beginning teachers, is not meeting district expectations under the Iowa teaching standards, then the evaluator shall recommend that the teacher participate in an intensive assistance program, which should not exceed one year. (Iowa Code §284.8)

Q: Is there a statutorily required length for intensive assistance programs?

A: No. Intensive assistance programs should just be of such length to reasonably allow for the teacher to correct behavior or performance that is not meeting teaching standards. This will vary depending on the particular standard or performance being addressed. (Iowa Code §284.8)

Q: Are districts statutorily required to place a teacher on an intensive assistance program if the teacher has previously participated in an intensive assistance program for the same teaching standard or standards being addressed?

A: No. A teacher is not entitled to another intensive assistance program under Iowa Code Chapter 284. The district may decide to provide an additional program, but there is no entitlement. (Iowa Code §284.8)

Q: What statutory options does a district have if a teacher fails to complete an intensive assistance program and meet Iowa teaching standards?

A: If a teacher fails to complete an intensive assistance program, then a district may: 1) terminate the teacher's contract immediately under Iowa Code §279.27 for cause; 2) terminate the teacher's contract at the end of the school year pursuant to Iowa Code §279.15; or, 3) continue the teacher's contract for a period not to exceed one year. However, the teacher's contract shall not be renewed in the third situation, and not be subject to Iowa Code §279.15. (Iowa Code §284.8)

Q: What is the statutorily required process for the termination of a non-probationary teacher's contract?

A: The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall deliver written notice to the teacher not later than April 30, either hand-delivered or by certified mail, that the superintendent will recommend to the board, at a meeting no later than May 15, that the teacher's continuing contract should be terminated at the end of the current school year. The notice letter shall include a short and plain statement of the reasons for recommended termination, which must be for just cause. Within five days of receiving written notice, the teacher may request a private hearing before the board, which is not subject to Chapter 21 (the open meetings law), and which shall be held between twenty to forty days after the request, unless the parties mutually agree otherwise. Within five days of the private hearing, the board shall meet in executive session and vote on what action to take regarding the teacher's contract. If the teacher disagrees with the board's action, then they may appeal the decision to the district court within 30 days of the filing of the board's decision. The record from the private hearing and board decision are all exempt from Iowa Code Chapter 22 (public records).

Q: What is the latest date by which a teacher may give notice of resignation under Iowa's ethics rules?

A: Practitioners must provide notice to employee boards no later than the latest of the following: 1) the practitioner's last work day of the school year; 2) the date set for the return of the contract as specified in statute; or, 3) June 30. (282 IAC 25.3(5)) In most cases, this means that teachers may resign by June 30. However, districts may want to include language in employee contracts and handbooks that practitioners will be charged some reasonable amount of liquidated damages if the practitioner resigns after they have submitted their signed contract to the district. Often, this amount might relate to additional costs associated with advertising and hiring a replacement for the employee.

Well, these notes are getting a bit long. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or your district's legal counsel. Go Cubs, go!



Keys to planning professional learning

I think it may have been the mid-'90s when I last had two Saturdays in a row home alone (we have yet to mark the milestone of an empty nest in spite of the fact our youngest is 23). On this most recent solo Saturday, giddiness had me cranking my music, wandering the house, and making a list of ALL that I wanted to accomplish in what would realistically be about 5 hours. I grabbed a third cup of coffee and sat down to prioritize my list. Twenty minutes later, I had a plan and was ready to execute.

As I gathered, then sorted the laundry to start a load (first priority), I began thinking about how my plan compared to a professional learning plan. I thought about the **Iowa Professional Development Model** and decided that planning for spring cleaning and spring planning for the upcoming school year are not so different. My wandering the house to determine what needed my attention represented the “Collecting and Analyzing” data component of the IPDM. Like the model, I also prioritized and set a goal; then I selected content — the cleaning tools and products that would best help me accomplish my goal. In ordering my tasks and activities, I designed a process for the day.

When I considered the “Ongoing Components,” I realized that the training and learning opportunities had already occurred. Growing up, my sisters and I were forced to participate in a weekly Family Cleaning Night. Mom identified four job lists, set expectations for quality work, and modeled for us. We each then “implemented” the list; however, early on, Mom realized she had missed a vital training component. One of my sisters had been completing her list in 10 minutes, and the rest of us were outraged. How could she be done vacuuming and dusting in 10 minutes? Clearly, she was doing a crappy job. It wasn't fair. After “encouraging” us to mind our own business, Mom revisited her expectations for quality work and provided each of us feedback and coaching. Behaviors changed, and Mom got the results she wanted. In evaluating the Family Cleaning Night program, Mom determined it a success such that it should continue indefinitely...

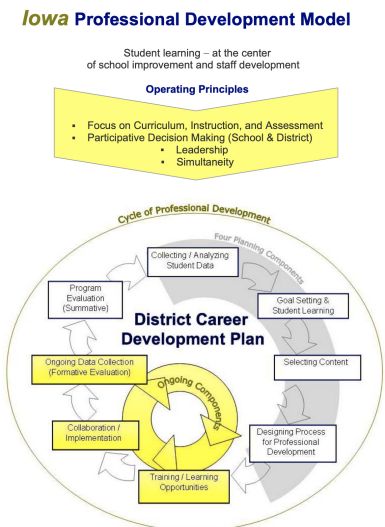
My thinking about the comparison between my cleaning plan and a professional learning plan surfaced two key insights. The first is that we need to be clear about the results we want and the impact of the current strategies or approaches we are using. In my cleaning plan example, the strategies and approaches I had acquired and practiced in my childhood were still getting me the results I wanted. My cleaning did not need a treatment plan — Mom had designed and implemented a plan many years ago that is sustained today.

In terms of a professional learning plan, the focus needs to be on an area where we not getting the results we want, where the strategies and approaches we are using do not lead to the impact we expect. For example, if our data are not where we want them to be for each and every student in reading, then we want to design a “treatment plan” targeting reading.

The second key insight is that we need to ensure we design training/implementation with four key components in mind in order to increase the likelihood of transfer into practice (**Joyce & Showers, 2002**). In the Family Cleaning Night program, Mom did not initially include the components of feedback and coaching. Once added, the results changed. Granted, learning and implementing a new instructional strategy or practice is much more cognitively demanding than implementing a new cleaning practice; and yet both require a behavior change. Getting to this behavior change happens when we include 1) theory and discussion, AND 2) modeling, AND 3) practice and feedback, AND 4) coaching. Note in the chart the difference in outcomes when all of the training components are in place.

	Outcomes		
	% of Participants who demonstrate knowledge, demonstrate new skills in a training/learning setting, and use new skills in the classroom		
Training Components	Knowledge	Skill Demonstration	Use in the Classroom
Theory & Discussion	10%	5%	0%
... + Modeling	30%	20%	0%
... + Practice & Feedback	60%	60%	5%
... + Coaching	95%	95%	95%

From the research of Joyce & Showers



Whether you're designing your own Family Cleaning Night program or bringing your leadership team together to plan professional learning for 2024-25, be intentional about grounding your process in a model that works! Here are **additional tools** to help you operationalize the IPDM.