



# REPORT

## Excellence in leadership: SAI honors Administrators of the Year

Congratulations to this year's Administrator of the Year nominees and recipients! Selection committee members interviewed finalists in each category and focused on how the Iowa Standards for School Leaders are reflected in each individual's practice. The recipients share leadership insights on the pages that follow.

Superintendent of the Year **Stacey Cole** of Storm Lake was featured in the November issue and Assistant Secondary Principal of the Year **Andy Werling** of Muscatine was spotlighted in December.

We look forward to recognizing **all Administrators of the Year** at the Annual Conference on August 7!



### Arts Administrator of the Year: Judi Roland, Waukee

**Selection Committee:** Iowa Alliance for Arts Education Board of Directors

### Central Office Administrator of the Year: Jen Vance, Central DeWitt

**Finalists:** Laura Medberry, College; and Shane Williams, Mississippi Bend AEA

**Nominees:** Katy Evenson, Northwest AEA; Cory Johnson, Burlington; Jen Koenen, Hampton-Dumont & CAL; and Dawn Schiro, Norwalk

**Selection Committee:** Bernadette Brustkern, Pleasant Valley; Amy Denney, Sioux City; Angela Hanson, Spencer; Chad Lang, Glenwood; Tesha Moser, Keystone AEA; and Anna Selk, Benton

### Elementary Principal of the Year: Jason Groendyke, Sheldon

**Finalists:** Christina Nugent, Dubuque; and Amy Whittington, Central Decatur

**Nominees:** Nicole Harmer, Marion; Angela Jones, Fairfield; Lara Justmann, Urbandale; Brian Mangold, Hubbard-Radcliffe; and Jennifer Richardson, Pleasant Valley

**Selection Committee:** Brian Costello, Northwood-Kensett; Greg Jergens, Mid-Prairie; Troy Lentell, Sioux Center; Dana Nally, Bedford; and Sheila Taylor, Norwalk

### Middle Level Principal of the Year: Patti Ryan, Denison

**Finalist:** Paul Gebel, Denver

**Selection Committee:** Fairouz Bishara-Rantisi, Des Moines; Alan Hartley, Bettendorf; Michael Peakin, Pleasant Valley; Mandie Reynolds, Lewis Central; and Toby Young, MMCURU

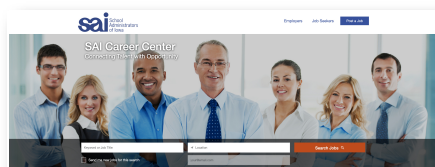
### Secondary Principal of the Year: Matt Kingsbury, Vinton-Shellsburg

**Finalists:** Jason Gabel, AGWSR; and Nicole Roder, Rock Valley

**Selection Committee:** Ken Baker, Forest City; Jake Feldman, Western Dubuque; Jennnifer Huling, Northeast; Brad Hurst, Decora; Doug Jiskoot, West Lyon

Hear from the five award recipients beginning on page 5.

## Post education jobs for FREE using SAI's new Career Center



Looking to target job candidates on a platform solely focused on education openings? Post your positions on SAI's new career site beginning May 15. For districts that have administrators who are current SAI members, basic job posts are free. An email will be sent to all active members early this month with more information.

### SAI Officers

#### President

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#### Past President

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### SAI Representative Council

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

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

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## Jobs, technology and education

Recently, I learned of an MIT research study, **Most work is new work**. Also, I had the opportunity to attend the Preparing Students for a Mobile Workforce event sponsored by Apple. As I was reading the article and listening to companies talk about the technology they are currently using in their industry, I found myself wondering what the implications are to PK-12 education. A new aha for me was that every company is a technology company.

We know schools are preparing students for jobs that do not yet exist and that technology is and will continue to have an impact on the type of jobs available. Technology is one factor, but the demand for specific jobs is also impacting the types of jobs available. These changes add a level of complexity to our work.

The pace of change in education continues to accelerate. From advancements in technology to shifts in pedagogy and the ever-evolving needs of our students, administrators are constantly faced with new challenges and opportunities. What worked yesterday may not be sufficient for tomorrow. I believe this calls for a mindset that values innovation, flexibility, and continuous learning.

Technology, undoubtedly, is a driving force behind much of the new work. We have already seen how it has impacted education by offering innovative tools for teaching, learning, and administration. Virtual classrooms, AI-driven personalized learning, data analytics for student performance — the possibilities are vast. However, alongside these opportunities come challenges.

Technology can both help and hurt future jobs. On one hand, it enables automation of repetitive tasks, freeing up educators' time to focus on more meaningful interactions with students. It enhances collaboration, extends beyond geographic borders, and supports international exchanges. It also equips students with essential digital skills, preparing them for the demands of the workforce.

On the other hand, the rapid pace of technological advancement can lead to job displacement and skills gaps. Roles that were once vital may become obsolete, requiring people to adapt and reskill. Moreover, the ethical use of technology, data privacy concerns, and digital equity issues demand careful consideration and proactive strategies.

As educational leaders, we must navigate this technological landscape thoughtfully. Embracing technology means not only leveraging its benefits but also mitigating its potential drawbacks. It involves promoting digital literacy, fostering a culture of responsible technology use, and ensuring access to digital resources for all students.

This so-called new work will require skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, creativity, and risk-taking. As leaders, we must create environments where innovative ideas are welcomed, where failure is seen as an opportunity to learn and improve, and where bold initiatives are supported. As I stated earlier, there are implications at all levels of our education system. We need to start with our youngest learners helping them to have the skills to be communicators, collaborators, critical thinkers, continuous learners, global contributors and innovators. We need students to be curious and invite questions. Identifying the skills needed to graduate and determining what those skills look like at each grade level is one way to ensure we are meeting the evolving needs of our students and preparing them for their next steps after the PK-12 experience.

One of the key implications of this reality is the need for ongoing professional development. As administrators, we must prioritize providing opportunities for our educators to enhance their skills, stay updated with best practices, and explore emerging trends. Investing in professional growth isn't just about meeting current demands; it's about preparing for the future and equipping our teams to excel in a changing environment.

The reality that most work today is new work presents both challenges and opportunities. By embracing change, prioritizing professional development, fostering collaboration and innovation we can drive positive outcomes for our students and schools. I hope you find time to consider the above information over the summer months as you continue to plan for the 2024-25 school year. I look forward to seeing each of you in August at the **SAI conference**, if not before.

## In Brief



### April Representative Council highlights

- Annual Conference registration amounts approved;
- Friend of the Association nominations sought;
- 2024-25 member dues approval using average administrator salary x .005 = \$605;
- Legislative activity;
- Membership, financials and preliminary 2024-25 budget work;
- Mentoring, Annual Conference planning and professional learning opportunities;
- Election update and finalizing 2025 Administrator of the Year nominees;
- IPERS general fund stood at \$43.268 billion March 22, a significant increase; and
- National affiliate reports.

## In memoriam

**Jody Gray** - retired superintendent, St. Ansgar (3-30-24)

**Jerry Wadden** - retired chief academic officer, Des Moines (1-5-24)

Submit news about an administrators passing at [sai-iowa.org/contact-us](https://sai-iowa.org/contact-us).

## Beyond Compliance: From Investigation to Resolution

June 6, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., SAI Office



School leaders are charged with investigating a broad array of issues each and every day. While each one of these issues comes with specific legal requirements, there is more to conducting an investigation than simply checking the compliance boxes. This session focuses on four key areas of the investigation process:

1. What are the types of investigations that school leaders conduct?
2. Who conducts investigations and how do you handle actual or perceived conflicts of interest?
3. What is the process and strategy necessary to reach an outcome?
4. How do you reach a conclusion and write a report?

Join experienced investigative attorney, Josie Lewis, as she provides insights, examples, and tools and resources to support you in effectively and efficiently conducting an investigation.

**Facilitator:** Josie Lewis, J.D.

**Register:** [sai-iowa.org/events](https://sai-iowa.org/events)

## 2024-25 Mentoring and Induction Program

If you plan to use SAI's program for your new administrators, start the process once you've made the hires so that mentee-mentor matches can begin as early as possible. Sign-up is open at [sai-iowa.org/mentoring-and-induction](https://sai-iowa.org/mentoring-and-induction).

Separate from the Mentoring Program are the New Administrators Institutes. These one-day events are available to administrators beginning the first year in their position, whether brand new or transitioning to a different role. The institutes provide new administrators the opportunity not only for learning focused on getting a solid start but also for developing their professional network. Register: [sai-iowa.org/events](https://sai-iowa.org/events)

## Legislative notes

from Dave Daughton, government relations director ✉

The 2024 legislative session went into overtime, but finally ended April 20. As I've stated before, the governor still has several bills that were sent to her to sign, as of this writing, and she does have the ability to line-item veto anything in the appropriations bills.

The summary of the last couple of weeks is [linked here](#), so I won't repeat that. We will put out at some point a full summary of the bills that were passed and signed.

Enjoy the last few weeks of school. As for me, I plan to watch a few more Cubs games and catch a few fish. Have a great May and summer.

## Calendar of events

### 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

### July

10 - New Superintendents Institute

23 - New Administrators Institute for Elementary Principals

25 - New Administrators Institute for Middle Level and Secondary Principals

30 - New Administrators Institute for Assistant/Associate Principals and Deans

### August

6 - Pre-Conference

7 & 8 - Annual Conference

Register and find more information at [sai-iowa.org/events](https://sai-iowa.org/events)

## Iowa Dept. of Ed. deadlines

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



## That's a (legislative) wrap

Cut! OK, let's try that again. Action!

Wouldn't it be nice to have directorial control over the Legislature, just as film directors can require actors to redo scenes in a movie or play?! Let's do that bill one more time and add a couple of percentage points to SSA. Well done.

Well, a guy can have his dreams.

Unfortunately, we are probably closer to being moviegoers than directors. The bills are sometimes a bit of a surprise to us when they finally premiere. Some are hits. Some are busts. Time will tell.

While I won't be giving any thumbs up or thumbs down, I will review a couple of bills and related topics that should be of particular interest to administrators as we move closer to summer. The genres covered in this month's review are hiring retired teachers and student absenteeism.

A big change to the bona fide retirement period FOR TEACHERS. Per adopted language in **HF 2612**, teachers whose first month of retirement is July 2024 or later, but before July 2027, may return to covered employment as a teacher after receiving one month of retirement benefits.

This is significant, as it should allow recently retired teachers to apply for open teaching positions as early as August in many situations. However, please take note of the following considerations:

1. This only applies to educators filling teaching positions. The law does not approve for administrators to come back to covered employment after one month unless they are doing so as teachers. Also, the law does not reference coaching, director, or advisor positions. As such, until we gain any clarification, I still interpret that recent retirees must still finish the four-month bona fide retirement period for all other education-related positions, outside of teaching students.
2. Administrators and/or other school officials SHALL not EVER promise future employment to an individual who is about to retire from covered IPERS employment, whether they need to complete one month or four months of bona fide retirement. Such promises of employment would almost certainly invalidate the bona fide retirement and may result in the employee and employer needing to make additional payments to IPERS. What does this mean? An administrator may share that the teacher or upcoming retiree may apply for a future position, IF IT IS STILL OPEN AFTER POSTING, upon completing the bona fide retirement period. "Ms. Carver, we will be advertising for a physics teacher and hopefully can find one. However, if the position is still open after completing your bona fide retirement for IPERS, please apply." Such comments are acceptable. As no promise is being made and the district is still attempting to make a good faith effort to fill the position with someone other than the retiree.
3. Encourage retirees to double-check with IPERS to ensure they are complying with the bona fide retirement and to check on how much they may make in reemployment during a current calendar year before it affects their retirement benefits.
4. Do not promise future employment prior to an individual completing the bona fide retirement period. OK, hopefully I have driven this point home.

Next up on this month's review of a legislative bill is **SF 2435**, the education appropriations bill, which includes some significant changes to Iowa's truancy/absenteeism and open enrollment laws. The changes to Iowa's truancy laws are too numerous to go through all in one column, but I will do my best to hit some of the highlights and potential points of special emphasis. With that, here are some areas that will be of particular interest:

- School districts and accredited nonpublic schools must create a policy covering both truancy and absenteeism, to include specific rules relating to children who are chronically absent.
- Truancy and the determination of when a compulsory age student is absent will include both excused and unexcused absences, EXCEPT for the following statutory exceptions:
  1. Students who have completed graduation requirements or have obtained a high school equivalency diploma.
  2. Students excused for sufficient reason by any court of record or judge.
  3. Students attending religious services or receiving religious instruction.
  4. Students unable to attend school due to "legitimate medical reasons." [Note - The code does not define "legitimate medical reasons," so I highly encourage you to consider how this term is defined in your policies. Otherwise, many individuals will undoubtedly argue that families or guardians may determine "legitimate medical reasons" on their own. Since truancy and absenteeism are undergoing an overhaul, it is fair to assume that the DE's past attendance guidelines are no longer in effect. As such, limitations on requiring medical certification might be considered in the policy unless the DE shares otherwise in guidance.]



5. Students who have an individualized education program that affects the child's attendance.

6. Students who have a 504 plan that affects the child's attendance. [Note: I would include specific language and conditions in a student's IEP or 504 to determine when the student's disability will result in excused absences and what documentation might be needed for those absences.]

- Students will be truant if they are absent from school, for any reason, for at least 20% of the days or hours in the grading period. Please note that hours are referenced, and not just days.

- Students will be considered "chronically absent" if they are absent for more than 10% of the days or hours in the grading period. Upon deeming a student chronically absent school officials will be required to notify the county attorney (either by email or ordinary mail) of the county in which the central office is located, as well as notify the student's parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian by certified mail.

- Once the student is absent from school for greater than 15% of a grading period, the school will be required to hold a school engagement meeting with the student and the student's parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian.

In addition to some of the points I have made above, I also encourage districts to consider how their policy will define when school officials deem a student to be present or absent. For instance, a district might decide that a student's participation in a civic activity or other activity benefiting the student's academic development provides good reason to consider the student present for school, as the student is learning a valuable skill. Having shared this, it is probably a bit of a stretch to consider a family's trip to Cabo or a club soccer team's games in Las Vegas as developing important educational skills for the student and thus a dubious reason to count the student as present rather than absent. Consider leaving the final authority to determine present or absent with a school administrator.

Separate from the topic of truancy and absenteeism, the appropriations bill also reinstates the March 1 deadline for open enrollment. Significantly, the bill also provides a means for receiving districts to prohibit compulsory-age students from remaining enrolled or from open enrolling into that district in the future, if the student is determined to be "truant."

You should expect to receive sample policies from IASB and/or your school's attorneys in the coming months. As I alluded to earlier, the bill goes into even greater detail regarding statutory attendance requirements, as well as the ability of the school to have even more stringent standards in many instances, but I wanted to hit the most critical points.

With that, my popcorn score is five out of 10 for this review. Have a safe and productive month, and go Cubs go!

*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.*

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## 2024 Administrators of the Year

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### Judi Roland, Arts Administrator of the Year, Waukee

Our community's unwavering support enables us to create an environment where students can explore their passions with guidance from some of the most talented and dynamic educators I've had the privilege to collaborate with. Through these experiences, I've witnessed the power of the arts and education in shaping thousands of young individuals as they pursue their passions and grow as humans.

A core leadership value I strive to embody daily is adaptability. The education landscape is constantly evolving, and school leaders need to be adaptable and flexible in response to changes and challenges. We must remain creative in the ways we continue to create inclusive opportunities for students to excel, especially in fine arts programs.

My commitment to adaptability and inclusion serves as a stepping stone to achieving a broader, more impactful goal: leaving a positive legacy. Leadership extends beyond immediate victories and strives to leave a positive impact on individuals, organizations, and communities. Leaders who prioritize service, mentorship, and leaving a meaningful legacy inspire others to follow in their footsteps, perpetuating a culture of leadership and excellence for generations to come.

Lead with love. Lead with integrity. Follow your heart and always do what is best for the kids. Find your way to leave your fingerprints on the future and look for ways to make a lasting, positive impact.

### Jason Groendyke, Elementary Principal of the Year, Sheldon

**What's a core leadership value that you hope to model for others every day?** Each day I strive to provide a positive, safe and nurturing school climate and culture for each person who walks through our doors. Making it a priority to support all staff and students each day and help them feel empowered, valued, supported, and loved. I want to help each person to become the best version of themselves and most importantly, not to compare themselves to others... it's the thief of joy. Just be you!

**About what in your school are you most proud?** It would be really easy for me to say that I am most proud of being named a 2023 National Blue Ribbon School, while this award is meaningful and I am proud of it, I can honestly say that I am most proud of the 10-year journey our staff and students (both past and present) continue to be on to provide the best learning experience for ALL of our learners. Throughout the years there has been much joy, as well as tears, but my staff continues to have a positive mindset and always puts the needs of our students first. I am truly blessed to work with the best!

**What is the best career advice you have ever received?** Leave it at the door. In life, we are faced with many challenges, whether it is at home or work. Regardless of where these challenges occur, it is important to leave them at the door as you walk out and head to your destination. It doesn't matter if you are heading to work or home from work, both places deserve 100% commitment in order to get the best of you!

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## If yes to this, then no to that

With warmer days comes the promise of summer — that season where you anticipate getting caught up; where you claim uninterrupted time to think and to strategize; and where you're more intentional about taking care of yourself and devoting time to friends and family. Before your mind races too far ahead making plans and mental commitments until you're once again feeling overcapacity and undone, stop. Let this summer be the launch of your new strategy — the one that stems from you acknowledging the limits on your time and energy. It might be as simple as asking yourself what **Michael Bungay Stanier** calls the Strategy Question before agreeing to anything: *If you say Yes to this, what are you saying No to?*

**Oliver Burkeman**, author of *Four Thousand Weeks*, and recovering productivity hacker, explains "...on the other side of the discomfort of accepting your limitations comes liberation, and for that matter a lot more productivity." However, accepting that we can't do it all doesn't feel good. We carry around our self-awarded trophy for "busyness" and tell ourselves *Good leaders do it all*; but we end up feeling overwhelmed, ineffective, and tired out. Stanier says, "Let's abandon busy," and I agree. The competition for who sent the most emails after midnight and before 4 a.m. isn't one with any winners. Furthermore, who says doing it all equates to being "good"? What if this summer you adopt a new narrative about good leadership? And what if you use the Strategy Question to filter your decisions?

You might be thinking, well that Strategy Question sounds a bit overly simplistic. Sounds (and looks) can be deceiving! Let's break it down. When you consider a Yes response, do you know what that Yes means? How much time will you need to commit? What will be your specific role and responsibilities? What's the timeline? How much physical, mental, emotional, or relational energy will be required? What other resources will be needed? Fast forward three months. You're engaged in this work to which you've said Yes. What are you doing and how are you feeling? What have you sacrificed and how does that make you feel? These questions bring clarity to what that Yes will entail.

Unfortunately, we don't take time to process through such clarifying questions when we receive a request for help. We hear those words *Can you help...* and we're triggered. That story we have going about what good leaders do starts playing in our heads, drowning out the part of our brains trying to remind us of the many other things we already have going on; and without hesitation, we find ourselves saying Yes.

Inevitably, saying Yes to one thing means you will have to say no to something else, and not just the something else that may be happening at the same time as this commitment, but other things that require time and energy. You may need to delay a project or extend a deadline. Or, you may find yourself dealing with unintended Nos as you turn down invitations from colleagues, friends, and family in order to give your energy to the Yes. You may find yourself apologizing for being late or missing a meeting because the new Yes has taken priority over other Yeses. You may wish you had just said No. No is a boundary. Be intentional about setting it.

The Strategy Question can help you! Stanier advises when faced with a request, stay curious longer before committing. In addition to posing the questions noted previously, you might also ask these which come from Stanier:

- Why are you asking me?
- Whom else have you asked?
- If I couldn't do all of this, but could do just a part, what part would you have me do?
- What do you want me to take off my plate so I can do this?

It can feel uncomfortable to say No. Being prepared with go-to responses can help.

- I am already committed to several other projects, and I want to be sure I have the time and energy to give them my best. So, I am saying No to this opportunity.
- I appreciate you asking. This proposal doesn't align with my current work and responsibilities, so I am declining.
- The deadline is too tight for me in light of my other obligations.

If it's something you're interested in and willing to do, but the timing is not right, say that.

May you be fully aware of the implications for the Yeses you embrace and feel empowered to say No to that which doesn't lead you toward your goals, both personal and professional. Happy summer!

" '...on the other side of the discomfort of accepting your limitations comes liberation, and for that matter a lot more productivity.' However, accepting that we can't do it all doesn't feel good."

## 2024 Administrators of the Year

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### Patti Ryan, Middle Level Principal of the Year, Denison

**What major building-level changes are you encountering?** A building-level change we've been working on is the addition of the Dual Language program as the students progress into the middle school grade levels. New for the fall of 2024 will be 7th grade Spanish Language Arts classes and Social Studies classes taught in Spanish. Our students are gaining academic language in both English and Spanish and the opportunity to have more bilingual teachers offers role models for our bilingual students.

**What leadership practices do you find most significant in implementing and supporting a systematized approach to teacher leadership?** A leadership practice that I find most helpful in supporting teacher leaders is asking for feedback about my own leadership practices. Our feedback team is made up of five volunteers who conduct surveys and compile the results for both me and our assistant principal. The team agrees to also choose something they can work on to become a better teacher leader. I've been receiving meaningful feedback that has helped me provide clearer communication and I believe when the leader gets better, everyone gets better!

**What are you currently reading or listening to?** There are a few podcasts I like to listen to while I prepare for the day. *The Interview Chair* with Jimmy Casas is quick and to the point, and I share his messages often in our staff newsletter. As a Character Strong district, I share the CS Podcast when the message matches up with our current work. Craig Groeschel's *Leadership Podcast* and *Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud* are a bit longer messages that I like to listen to while walking my dogs. Hearing from peers in *It's been SAId* is fun, too! *Wellbeing at Work* by Jim Clifton and Jim Harter is the book at the top of my Audible library. I am planning to use this framework as I work on my research proposal for my dissertation to find out more about the wellbeing of teacher apprentices and their journeyman teachers in Iowa who are part of the TPRA program. I've invested in several audiobooks by author Cy Wakeman after hearing her message at the fall SAI conference — *No Ego, Reality-Based Leadership*, and *Life's Messy, Live Happy* are a few of them!

### Matt Kingsbury, Secondary Principal of the Year, Vinton-Shellsburg

**About what in your school are you most proud?** During my tenure at Vinton-Shellsburg High School, we have implemented, modified, and sustained a multitude of programs, schedules, activities, and in general "the way we do things." Changing any aspect or component of your school takes time, energy, and commitment from students, staff, and stakeholders.

One of the things that I am most proud of at Vinton-Shellsburg High School is the individuals that I have the opportunity to work with each day. The staff at V-S has a growth mindset when it comes to our students and instruction. We have established a culture where staff members have the flexibility to try new teaching strategies, will provide constructive feedback to each other regarding assessment/instruction through AIW/PLC committees, and are comfortable having conversations with me expressing concerns or ideas.

Secondly, I have great school-community support. Our school-community is very supportive of our school system and is willing to help and assist our needs when asked. Throughout the school year, many local business owners volunteer time to speak to classes, support programs with donations, and participate in school committees. Each year our school-community distributes around \$160,000 in local scholarships to support students in their post-secondary endeavors.

Lastly and, most importantly, I am most proud of our students. Academically, our students perform very well in the classroom and on standardized tests. While our school is not very diverse demographically, we are fairly diverse in our academic skill levels. Daily, I observe through classroom walk-throughs students doing their best to overcome academic challenges, trying to master a skill/task, and putting forth their best effort. I am also very proud of how our students represent themselves both inside and outside of school. Our students make positive contributions with community service initiatives, support each other in the school setting and activities, display great character, and are personable to have conversations with.

I am proud to be associated with Vinton-Shellsburg High School and everything that encompasses it. We have a student-first mentality.

### Jen Vance, Central Office Administrator of the Year, Central DeWitt

I want to take this opportunity to highlight how lucky I am to work with the educators in our district. Staff in our district show up every day in the best interest of students. We have so many things to be proud of in our district and the staff is at the top of that list.

Over and over again they demonstrate their willingness to change and adapt to meet the needs of the students. We have so many examples but I want to highlight a few. In our high school, a group of teachers is exploring Competency-Based Education that will allow students to earn multiple credits and participate in engaging cross-curricular learning opportunities. Students currently have access to a course that combines Social Studies and LA in an engaging manner. Starting next year, students will have the opportunity to take a course that combines Geometry and Construction as well as have the opportunity to run a food trailer business combining business concepts and food preparation/service. How cool is that?!

Our K-8 literacy teachers have spent the last two years exploring and implementing new ways to provide literacy instruction. This is not easy work, it requires dedication and a willingness to collaborate and in some instances make a change in practice that is uncomfortable.

I know there are teachers like this in every district across the state and their efforts and dedication are what make the work of an administrator possible!

# Cultivating Connections: The Heartbeat of Education

Submitted by SAI Corporate Partner Capturing Kids' Hearts®

In the dynamic world of education, where each day brings new challenges and opportunities, one constant remains: the enduring impact of genuine human connection. Picture a classroom buzzing with energy, where teachers and students are sharing lessons and forging bonds that transcend the boundaries of textbooks and tests.

These authentic relationships, steeped in empathy and a commitment to nurturing a supportive environment, form the bedrock of impactful teaching. It's about more than just imparting knowledge; it's about igniting a spark within each student, fueling a lifelong journey of discovery and growth.

As educators, our mission is expansive. It extends beyond the confines of academic achievements to empowering our students to unlock their full potential and become agents of change in their communities and beyond.

Together, let's create vibrant spaces where every student is not just a passive learner but an active participant in their education journey. Let's cultivate a culture where curiosity is celebrated, and every voice is valued.

These authentic connections are not just fleeting moments; they are seeds of transformation that have the power to shape not only minds but also futures. So, let's water these seeds with intention and care, nurturing environments where students thrive and are inspired to leave their mark on the world.

To learn more about how your team can use the Capturing Kids' Hearts® Process to cultivate connections on your campus, visit [ckh.org](http://ckh.org).

## SAI Membership for 2024-25 opens May 1

- Renewal Notices for 2024-25 will be emailed May 1 to current SAI members or the District's Business Office (if requested).
- review and update your member profile in your Member Compass.
- submit the invoice to your business office for payment
- membership dues invoices may be paid by check or online via credit card or ACH/bank transfer.

New to SAI? Administrators may join at [sai-iowa.org/membership-information](http://sai-iowa.org/membership-information).

### Volunteer for a committee

SAI's mission cannot be achieved without the support of member volunteers. Consider volunteering for a 2024-25 committee. A variety of options are available. Read more and sign up: [sai-iowa.org/volunteer-for-an-sai-committee](http://sai-iowa.org/volunteer-for-an-sai-committee)

## 2023-24 Administrator salary information (FTE)

(Based on raw data provided by the Iowa Department of Education.)

Additional staff salary information is available on the [DE website](http://DE website).

| Position                          | Count | Avg. Salary | Totals        |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------------|---------------|
| Superintendent                    | 263   | \$175,676   | \$46,202,721  |
| Assistant Superintendent          | 22    | \$162,025   | \$3,564,560   |
| Curriculum Director               | 137   | \$97,008    | \$13,290,102  |
| High School Principal             | 337   | \$117,790   | \$39,695,109  |
| Assistant High School Principal   | 194   | \$108,717   | \$21,091,132  |
| Junior High Principal             | 49    | \$115,665   | \$5,667,578   |
| Assistant Junior High Principal   | 32    | \$104,410   | \$3,341,120   |
| Middle School Principal           | 228   | \$115,486   | \$26,330,801  |
| Assistant Middle School Principal | 105   | \$104,905   | \$11,014,997  |
| Elementary Principal              | 661   | \$113,085   | \$74,749,490  |
| Assistant Elementary Principal    | 87    | \$93,133    | \$8,102,565   |
| Other Principal                   | 19    | \$120,050   | \$2,280,952   |
| Assistant Other Principal         | 3     | \$104,090   | \$312,270     |
| AEA Administrator                 | 157   | \$141,368   | \$22,194,768  |
| Totals                            | 2,294 |             | \$277,838,165 |



### Honoring 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](http://bit.ly/3DpFscG).

Building Leaders  
At Every Level



The National Conference on School Leadership  
July 15-17, 2024 | Nashville, TN  
Powered by NAESP & NASSP



Register now at [theunitedconference.org](http://theunitedconference.org)