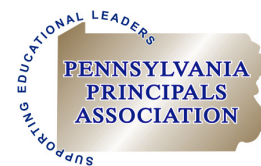


Executive Director's Notepad . . .

Farewell and Thanks...



By Paul M. Healey, Ph.D., PA Principals Association Executive Director

It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve as Executive Director of the PA Principals Association over the last eight years. I have been extremely fortunate over my educational career to be surrounded by very talented and dedicated individuals who have inspired me, challenged me, and made me a better leader. In December, I will officially be fully retired, and I do so with great pride in our organization.

Over the last eight years, we have accomplished so much together. I thank our many board members and officers for their insights, passion and commitment to the organization to enact some substantial changes that have propelled the organization forward. Following are some of these changes:

- The organization was rebranded to make it more recognizable across the state from PAESSP to simply the PA Principals Association.
- The enactment of the first-ever strategic and technology plans for the organization.
- The creation of a summer professional development opportunity for school leaders known as the PA Educational Leadership Summit - now in its fifth year.
- The approval from the PA Department of Education (PDE) to offer in-district workshops for Act 45 credits.
- The partnership with the Illinois Principals Association to offer over 20 micro-credentials for school leaders that are also approved for Act 45 hours.
- A clear focus on membership which has stabilized and grown membership numbers when other organizations were losing members.
- A clear focus on providing member services such as our hallmark service of providing legal support and advice 24/7.
- Assisting school districts with the creation and revision of Act 93 plans.
- A refresh of our website and creating a footprint on social media platforms.
- The production of member webinars on timely topics, especially during the pandemic.
- Elevating our status with our partner organizations and PDE to the point where we have a seat at the table and are often contacted for our input.
- Re-establishing and ramping up our advocacy efforts at the local, state and national levels.
- Providing regional meetings for our members across the state.
- Being financial stewards of our assets by growing our income and investments and placing the organization on a very sound financial foundation.
- And, being very nimble by changing with the times so that our organization remains relevant and responsive to member needs.

WE all did this together and it certainly took a great team to make it happen! I am confident that these great strides will continue into the future with the new leadership. Dr. Eric Eshbach, the new Executive Director, and I have been colleagues and friends for many years. We have worked over the past year to make sure there is a seamless transition, and he is ready and very capable of leading the organization. He will be joined by Dr. Michael Snell who recently retired as a superintendent and is known throughout the area for being innovative and knowledgeable in the areas of leadership and curriculum and instruction. This will certainly be a dynamic duo and I look forward to being one of their biggest cheerleaders.

I also wish to take this opportunity to publicly thank a number of individuals who have supported and encouraged me over the past eight years. First, Dr. Joe Clapper, the past Assistant Executive Director, who was on this journey with me for most of my tenure. Joe and I spent countless hours working on many of the enacted changes, and he is directly responsible for the organization's success and status among our colleagues. Second, Joe Foriska who was the

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Western Regional Manager for many years, and who was always so supportive and willing to tackle any project we sent his way. I also leaned on him for his history of the organization and as a sounding board.

To the six Presidents of the organization whom I have had the honor of working with over the years: Kurt Nyquist, Bill Ziegler, Jacqueline Clarke Havrilla, Beth Haldeman, Mike Allison and Jon Ross, along with the many board members who have volunteered their service to make an impact on the field and the organization - *I thank you.*

And finally, to an amazing staff who does not always get the credit they deserve for all of their support and work on behalf of the organization: Virginia, Mary,

Brittany, Stephanie, Sheri, Anita and Barry - *I will miss all of you and thank you for a wonderful eight years.*

To all of our members – *keep doing what you are doing and stay the course.* Our schools and children need you and there is no better example of how valuable you are to your community than over the last 18 months. Know that you are making an impact and that the PA Principals Association is here to support and advocate for you. Some day you will look back on your own career, and come to the conclusion, as I have, that I would do it all it again and that I gained so much more from my career than I gave.

Paul

Matthew Stem To Receive 2021 Educational Excellence Award



Matthew Stem, Assistant Executive Director at the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13, has been selected to receive the **2021 Educational Excellence Award** by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. He is the former Deputy Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), a

position he held since 2015. The association's most prestigious award is given to a person who has been a "friend of public education" and who has made significant contributions to the attainment of educational excellence in the commonwealth's elementary and secondary schools.

According to PA Principals Association Executive Director, Paul M. Healey, Ph.D., "Matt Stem is the recipient of this year's Educational Excellence Award. This annual award is bestowed upon an individual who has made substantial contributions in the field of education and who has been a supporting partner of our organization. During his tenure at PDE, in his role as deputy secretary, Matt led with conviction, integrity and always put children first. In my countless calls and interactions with Matt over the past eight years, he always kept us abreast of what was happening at PDE and sought our organization's input on many issues. He is certainly going to be missed at PDE, but we wish him success in his new role. It is an honor and a privilege to call Matt Stem my colleague and my friend. He truly is deserving of this honor."

Mr. Stem's education career spans more than 22 years, including experience as a teacher, principal, district-level administrator and assistant superintendent. He spent 19 years with the School District of Lancaster and three at the Wyomissing Area School District. In 2015, he was named the Deputy Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education for PDE (under the direction of then Secretary Pedro

Rivera) where he served for six years. While at PDE, he was instrumental in the development of the Future Ready PA Index, the Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated Plan and the Future Ready Comprehensive Plan. In addition, he served as liaison to the State Board of Education Council on Basic Education, provided testimony to the State Education Committees on numerous K-12 educational matters, led the process for developing Computer Science Standards as well as leading and advancing many other statewide initiatives.

In his new role at IU13, he supports the strategic vision and work of the Executive Director's Office, as well as the growth of aspiring leaders within IU13 and schools across the commonwealth.

"There is no one more deserving of this award than Matt Stem. He has served as an advocate for children and educators in Pennsylvania and was instrumental in creating an atmosphere of acceptance and transparency at PDE. Most importantly, he is a practitioner who understands the struggles and victories principals experience on a daily basis. His friendly demeanor and approachable style assured me that we had a true transformational leader making decisions in Harrisburg," said Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, Acting Executive Director, PA Principals Association.

Mr. Stem holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Millersville University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in educational administration and a Pennsylvania Superintendent's Letter of Eligibility from Temple University. He lives with his wife Mimi and their two adult children, Nick and Talia, in East Hempfield.

"It is a tremendous honor to receive the Educational Excellence Award on behalf of all of those with whom I've had the privilege of collaborating and serving children over the years. The partnerships established between associations like the PA Principals Association and state officials ensure that our school leaders and their teams are supported in making a difference in the lives of their students," shared Mr. Stem.