

The Pennsylvania **ADMINISTRATOR**

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

✓ *2022 Award
Recipients*

✓ *Welcome
New Regional
Service Specialists*

*Plus...Hiring Process Tips, Why Leadership
Matters & Legal Corner (Due Process)*

Magazine of the Pennsylvania
Principals Association

FALL 2022



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Editor's Note ...

It is hard to believe how quickly our autumn days are dwindling and the holiday season is right around the corner. The school year is flying by but there is still time to expand your personal growth and learning with our professional development opportunities such as *Micro-credentials*, the *New Principal Book Club* or joining a Zoom webinar from our *Professional Development Calendar (Clockwork Part 2 on Dec. 12, 2022; Calendar for January through May 2023 coming soon!)*. See pages 13 and 38 for more!



The PA Principals Association is working diligently on a new format for its annual conference. We will once again be joined by the PA Association of School Administrators (PASA) for **SUMMIT'23 - the PA Educational Leadership Summit** - which will be held from **August 6-8, 2023, at The Alloy King of Prussia and Upper Merion Area High School**. Act 45 hours will be available! Mark your calendar and watch your inbox and our website, www.papprincipals.org, for exciting details coming your way!

We hope you take some time away from your busy schedules to check out this edition of *The Pennsylvania Administrator*. It is filled with valuable articles and information you can use in your schools and districts. We will once again have a theme for our spring 2023 edition. Information will be posted on our website and printed in our upcoming publications. If you are interested in submitting an article for the winter 2023 issue, please send it to me at sherit@papprincipals.org by **Dec. 15, 2022**. Criteria and specifications are available at www.papprincipals.org.

Enjoy this issue!

Sheri L. Thompson, Editor

The Pennsylvania ADMINISTRATOR

Volume 26 • Number 3 • Fall 2022

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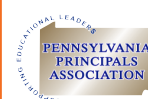
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The Pennsylvania Administrator is published three times a year in the winter, spring and fall by the Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Foundation and the Pennsylvania Principals Association, 122 Valley Road, Enola, PA 17025. (717) 732-4999. It is entered as third class mail in Dauphin County, PA.

Articles printed in the publication may be divergent in the point of view or controversial, but the Pennsylvania Principals Association feels that members can best be served through discussion and debate of issues. The articles published in *The Pennsylvania Administrator* represent the ideas and/or beliefs of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the ideas and views of the Pennsylvania Principals Association unless so stated. Paid advertisements printed in the publication do not denote endorsement by the association.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

July 2023

10-12 NAESP'23 - Pre-K-8 Principals Conference
Gaylord National Resort &
Convention Center
National Harbor, Maryland

20-23 IGNITE'23 - NASSP School Leader Conference
Gaylord Rockies Resort &
Convention Center
Denver, Colorado

August 2023

6-8 SUMMIT'23 - PA Educational Leadership
Summit
The Alloy King of Prussia &
Upper Merion Area High School
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

PA Principals Podcast - 3 in a Quarter

The Pennsylvania Principals Association's podcast, "3 in a Quarter," focuses on three takeaways and is intended to be only 15 minutes in length (or a quarter of an hour). A new episode will be released each month. Please 'Like' our podcast and Subscribe to it by searching for 3 in a Quarter and clicking on **Subscribe**. Remember to use the hashtag: #DY3Q (Did You 3 in a Quarter?)



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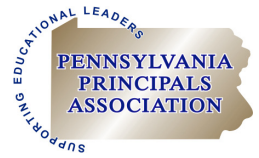
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Executive Director's Notepad . . .

This fall, more than the leaves are changing



**By Dr. Eric C. Eshbach,
PA Principals
Association
Executive
Director**

The onset of autumn is marked by change. The change in temperature, the vibrant changes in leaf color and the changes associated with a new school year are all indicative of the fact that nothing in life stays the same. Early indications from conversations I've had with principals around the state tell me that this fall has been a much more tranquil start to the school year for most of you. Last year at this time, we were struggling through the challenges of mask mandates, learning loss and uncertainty from the ongoing pandemic. While those have certainly been replaced by other challenges, my hope is that the fall of 2022 has been more productive and more peaceful than the fall of 2021.

In our democracy, autumn also ushers in a significant change in our government. For the first time in many years in Pennsylvania, we had the opportunity to select a new governor and a new U.S. Senator. With the election results becoming official, it is perceivable that significant changes lie ahead with both Governor-elect, Josh Shapiro, and U.S. Senator-elect, John Fetterman. Maybe even more significant is the impact the November 8th election may have on the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. As I write this article, there are still three State House Districts that have yet to be called but which could transfer the balance of power in the Pennsylvania State House to the Democrats.

When Josh Shapiro takes office in January, it will be the first time in decades that a new governor will take office who is from the same political party as his predecessor. We should not be lulled into thinking that this will equate "status quo," especially as it relates to public education in the commonwealth. While the new governor is from the same political party as the incumbent, it is expected that he will be quite different in how he organizes his cabinet, the manner in which he prioritizes policy and the way in which he governs. Currently, all of this remains an unknown.

Equally unknown and significant are the changes in the legislature in Harrisburg, especially in the House of Representatives. We will most definitely see changes in leadership of the House Education Committee, as the Majority Chair, Curtis Sonney, and the Minority Chair, Mark Longietti, did not seek reelection. Which party will have leadership in all committees is yet to be decided. Changes in committee leadership, changes in leadership at the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the potential for each party controlling one of the houses of the legislature will certainly play a role in which legislative issues gain momentum in the upcoming session.

No matter the outcome of the election, the individuals appointed to leadership roles, or the committee structure in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania's principals need to take this opportunity to become known and to be heard. During this time of change, it is important that our elected officials understand the needs and challenges you face. Do the elected officials who represent you in Harrisburg and in Washington:

1. Understand the challenges your school faces?
2. Understand the impact the inequity of school funding has on your school and your students?
3. Show an interest in ensuring all students succeed and help to build a strong, vibrant economy and citizenry?
4. Are more interested in special interest groups and accepting money from groups that take money away from public education?
5. Realize the impact the past several years have had on the number of candidates you have for a teaching position, the number of substitute teachers on which you can depend on any given day and the mental health issues our staff and students face?



Continued on next page

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6. Make attempts to understand the challenges we face by visiting our schools and talking with our staff and students?
7. Believe all students have the right to a high-quality, fully funded education and have defined how s/he will advocate and vote to ensure that happens?

If you have answered “no” to even one of these questions, it behooves the community and the students you have been called to serve to make every effort to change the “no” into a “yes.” Take time to call your state senators and representatives. Invite them to your building. Ask them to read to your students. Encourage them to hold a question-and-answer session with a class of students, a group

of parents, your Act 93 team or even your school board. Call them, email them or text them when a crucial vote is being considered that impacts you, your school or your community. *They need to hear from you!*

The natural change that occurs in our democracy surrounding elections makes our nation unique and makes our citizens critically important. While 2022 may have been considered an “off-year election,” it was anything but that for Pennsylvania. The results demonstrate that now, perhaps even more so than in the past, we need to be sure that we are helping to write the narrative for what lies ahead in educational policy and practice. *Let us remember how vitally important our advocacy and our voices are to the children and communities we serve.*

Dr. Diane Kirk Honored with the 2022 Educational Excellence Award

Diane L. Kirk, Ph.D., recently retired Clinical Associate Professor in the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Education, and the Director of the Tri-State Area School Study Council, is the recipient of the **PA Principals Association’s 2022 Educational Excellence Award**. 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. Dr. Kirk was presented with this award at the PA Principals Association’s LEAD22 Conference on Sunday, Oct. 16, 2022, during the Awards Dinner.

In addition, Dr. Kirk was surprised with a retirement celebration, surrounded by 100 colleagues, her family and friends, held on Wednesday, August 17, 2022, at the Edgewood Country Club in Churchill, Pennsylvania. Dr. Eric Eshbach, PA Principals Association Executive Director, presented her with a beautiful planter, and along with Dr. Carol Sprinker, PA Principals Association board member, revealed that she was selected to receive the 2022 Educational Excellence Award. Dr. Eshbach said, “Dr. Kirk’s commitment to Pennsylvania educational leaders and to public education made her the perfect choice to receive the PA Principals Association’s most prestigious award. She is well known across the commonwealth for her work as a leader, teacher and a mentor.”

In her esteemed 50-year career in education, Dr. Kirk has served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent of schools (Peters Township School District from 1997-2006). For the last 17 years, she served as an associate professor of education at the University of Pittsburgh where she managed the superintendent, principal and curriculum and instruction internship courses in the Department of Administrative and Policy Studies that all students must complete in order to gain certification in Pennsylvania. As the Director of the Tri-State School Study Council, Dr. Kirk manages Tri-State’s activities, including research and development assistance for member school districts, conferences and professional development opportunities.

Dr. Sprinker, who nominated Dr. Kirk for this award, said, “Dr. Kirk is a fierce advocate of public education and strong supporter of educational leaders across the commonwealth. She values relationships, models professionalism and encourages career development for principals and superintendents. She’s a teacher, mentor, counselor and friend who will be greatly missed at the University of Pittsburgh.”

Dr. Kirk holds a bachelor’s degree in education from Youngstown University; a Master of Science in education and her elementary principal certificate

from Duquesne University; and a Ph.D. in educational administration from the University of Pittsburgh.

“I am so honored to be recognized for doing what I love doing so much and for working with these people who are trying to manage these very challenging jobs. We need strong, resilient leaders who are compassionate about children in principal roles. I’ve worked with so many students across the commonwealth, and mainly in western Pennsylvania, who are now in principal roles, and it is very gratifying,” shared Dr. Kirk.

Dr. Kirk resides in Pleasant Hills, Pennsylvania (South Hills of Pittsburgh). She has one son, John E. Kirk IV.



PA Principals Association Executive Director, Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, presented the 2022 Educational Excellence Award to Diane L. Kirk, Ph.D., at the annual Awards Dinner on Oct. 16 held during the LEAD22 Conference at Kalahari Resorts Poconos.

2022-2023 PA Principals Association Board of Directors

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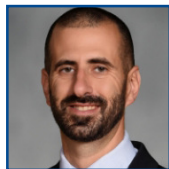
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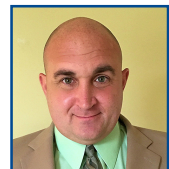
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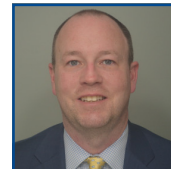
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Central-I (S)



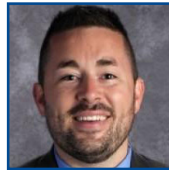
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Central-II (S)



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KEY:
(E) - Elementary
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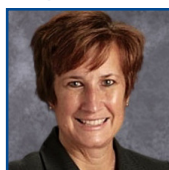
Dr. Daniel J. Beck
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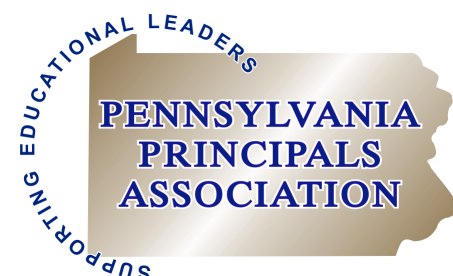


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Cocalico S.D.



PA Principals Association Welcomes Three Regional Service Specialists

Regional Service Specialists (RSS) Dr. Dina Wert, Susan Martin and Cynthia Zajac recently joined the PA Principals Association's staff to provide support and assistance to members in each of the three regions across Pennsylvania: **East (I, II, III), Central (I, II, III)** and **West (I, II, III)**. **Dina**, who retired in 2019 after serving as an educator for 34 years, will be serving members in the **East Region**; **Susan**, who retired in August 2022 after 34 years of educational service, will be serving members in the **Central Region**; and **Cynthia**, who retired in July 2022 after 33 years in education, will be serving members in the **West Region**.

The Regional Service Specialists will report to the Executive Director and provide professional support to Association members, support regional board members with region activities, ensure the successful operation of professional learning activities and assist with membership development.

Dina retired as Principal of West Bradford Elementary School in the Downingtown Area School District. Her 34 years in public education have taken her from the Wyomissing Area School District to Wilson (West Lawn) School District and the Downingtown Area School District, retiring with 17 years in the principalship. She has been a member of the PA Principals Association for 21 years. In addition, Dina is a National Distinguished Principal (2013) and has supported both the PA Principals Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals in various roles. She is a PIL facilitator for the PA Department of Education (PDE) and *is excited for this new venue to further support our PA principals*.

Susan retired as Principal of Nancy Grayson Elementary School in the Shippensburg Area School District. She also has experience as a middle school teacher and an elementary school counselor. She's been a member of the PA Principals Association for 22 years. *Susan is excited and anxious to begin working with and providing support to members in the Central Region and principals in PA.*

Cynthia retired as Principal of Rolling Ridge Elementary School in the Harbor Creek School District (near Erie) after working 33 years in the district. She was a teacher, instructional coach and a math specialist and has delivered professional development in a variety of settings. In addition, she is a PIL facilitator for PDE. *Cynthia is a proud member of the PA Principals Association and is looking forward to collaborating with and supporting PA principals.*

According to Dr. Eric Eshbach, PA Principals Association Executive Director, "The addition of these Regional Service Specialists begins a new era as the PA Principals Association engages in multiple efforts to take our signature services out to the members. We realize that it is not possible for members to always come to us when they are in need. These three specialists are highly successful principals who understand the challenges our members face. I am excited about the opportunities that now exist thanks to their expertise as principals and dedication to our association."

The Regional Service Specialists may be contacted directly at: Dr. Dina Wert - wert@papprincipals.org; Susan Martin - martin@papprincipals.org; and Cynthia Zajac - zajac@papprincipals.org.

Please join us in welcoming them to the PA Principals Association team!



Regional Service Specialists from left to right: Cynthia Zajac (West Region), Dr. Dina Wert (East Region) and Susan Martin (Central Region).

National Distinguished Principal

Robert Palazzo Named Pennsylvania's 2022 National Distinguished Principal



Robert Palazzo, Principal of Panther Valley Elementary School (PVES) in the Panther Valley School District (PVSD), in Carbon County, has been named **Pennsylvania's 2022 National Distinguished Principal (NDP)** by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. As a state winner in the National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) National Distinguished Principal (NDP) Program, Mr. Palazzo was honored by NAESP and the PA Principals Association at special award ceremonies in October.

Dr. Jonathan G. Ross, President of the PA Principals Association and Chair of the NDP Selection Committee, said, "Our committee is pleased to announce Robert Palazzo as the 2022 Pennsylvania National Distinguished Principal. During his tenure as principal, PVES has been transformed into a community-focused learning environment that partners with multiple businesses and organizations to provide an exemplary program for the children in

their care. Whether spearheading an effort to build his students a playground or promoting literacy by bringing the school "Book Buggy" to local events, Mr. Palazzo stops at nothing to secure needed services for his students. As a result, the teachers, staff and community at large feel a part of something greater than themselves that will undoubtedly shape the lives of a generation of children for the better. We have no doubt that Mr. Palazzo represents everything that is great about Pennsylvania principals and will represent us well on the national stage."

Mr. Palazzo served in his current role as the principal at Panther Valley Elementary School (K-3) since 2017. Previously, he was a school psychologist in the Palmerton Area School District from 2008-2017.

Under Mr. Palazzo's leadership, the first pre-kindergarten program within PVSD was established; a playground for students was built through community-based, grassroots fundraising within 18 months; and in collaboration with St. Luke's University Health Network, a family development specialist position was created in the district to help increase preventative factors and decrease barriers within the community. Mr. Palazzo explained, "This school year, we opened the first pre-kindergarten class in the history of the district and have plans to expand the program for the following year by opening an early learning center."

Mr. Palazzo is a member of the Pennsylvania Principals Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. In 2021, he was awarded the Pennsylvania Community Star by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health for his collaborative efforts with St. Luke's University Health Network.

According to PA Principals Association Executive Director, Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, "In the current environment where school leaders are struggling to address learning loss, the social-emotional needs of students and the varying demands of parents and communities, the selection of Robert Palazzo as Pennsylvania's National Distinguished Principal for 2022 sends a powerful message to our members. Mr. Palazzo has a keen understanding of each of these issues and has developed practices in his school that other principals should be clamoring to replicate. The Pennsylvania Principals Association has a history of awarding the NDP honor to principals who become mentors for others and leaders in our state. I am confident Robert will live up to that tradition."

Mr. Palazzo earned a Bachelor of Science in psychology, a Master of Science in school psychology and his Certificate in Advanced Study in School Psychology from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Oswego. He received a Master of Education from Wilkes University.

"Much of my success, is due in part to the support and patience of my wife, Katie. We have a five-year-old daughter, Isabel, and a two-year-old daughter, Rose, who keep me busy when I am not at work," he shared.

"Robert Palazzo is a man of good character. He is able to balance his professional career and his family in a manner that is respected by his staff, friends and community. The Panther Valley School District has been fortunate to have Robert Palazzo as Principal."

**- David McAndrew
Superintendent
Panther Valley School District**

Principal of the Year

Ryan J. Caufman Named Pennsylvania's 2022 Principal of the Year



Ryan J. Caufman, Principal of Central York High School in the Central York School District, has been named **Pennsylvania's 2022 Principal of the Year** by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. As a state winner in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) Principal of the Year Program, Mr. Caufman was also under consideration to be named the National Secondary Principal of the Year. He is currently deployed with the PA Army National Guard to the Middle East. This is his third overseas deployment in his 22 years of service with the Army. Prior to his deployment in September, Mr. Caufman received his award at a special award presentation in his district.

According to PA Principals Association Executive Director, Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, "We congratulate Ryan Caufman, an exceptional leader and principal, for being named the 2022 Secondary Principal of the Year. He was selected to receive this esteemed award by a committee of his peers from the PA Principals Association for his leadership and outstanding contributions to his school, his students and his community. Additionally, he was instrumental in the creation and implementation of numerous programs at Central York High School which have had a significant impact on school culture and helped many students. We are extremely proud to have him represent our association and secondary principals across Pennsylvania."

An educator for 24 years, Mr. Caufman served in his current role as the principal at Central York High School for 14 years. Previously, he was a secondary mathematics teacher and assistant principal in the West Shore School District. Before he became principal of Central York High School, he served for two years as an assistant principal. In addition, Mr. Caufman is an officer in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, serving proudly for the past 22 years.

Under Mr. Caufman's exemplary leadership, numerous programs and initiatives have been developed and implemented in his school. A direct result of his efforts is the customization of the high school educational program. "I am proud of the hard work that administrators and teachers have done to develop a variety of learning experiences, allowing students to learn at different rates, in a variety of styles, while engaging in areas of interest that prepare them for their preferred future," explained Mr. Caufman. Another program that has had tremendous success with some of their most at-risk students is the *Panther Pathways program*. This school-wide program provides struggling learners the opportunity to complete credit recovery, while providing group and individual counseling through a partnership with a private agency. According to Caufman, "*Panther Pathways* has helped 116 at-risk students overcome their obstacles and graduate from high school."

In addition, the implementation of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) has had a significant impact on Central York's school culture and has provided a community for many students who were not engaged in other co-curricular activities. "This program provides students with true leadership opportunities. Students are responsible to lead all activities and events under the mentorship of their instructors. It is an amazing program," said Mr. Caufman.

Mr. Caufman earned a Bachelor of Science in education from Millersville University of Pennsylvania and a Master of Education from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania.

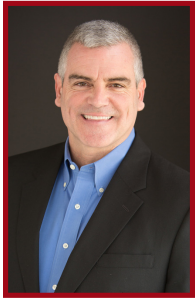
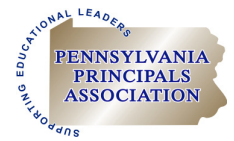
Mr. Caufman and his wife, Angela, a special education teacher, have two boys, Reid and Victor. In his spare time, he enjoys watching and coaching his sons as they play hockey, lacrosse, baseball and flag football.

"In my 15 years in school administration, I have not encountered a stronger leader than Mr. Caufman. Mr. Caufman has deftly navigated tumultuous times to keep his faculty focused on doing what is best for kids. He takes tremendous pride in the culture and climate of his building...and works tirelessly to do what is best for kids. The Central York community is tremendously fortunate to have him leading for our staff and students alike."

**- Dr. Peter Aiken
Superintendent
Central York School District**

From the Desk of the Assistant Executive Director

What is your mission?



By Dr. Michael S. Snell,
PA Principals Association
Assistant Executive Director

Many years ago, as a young assistant principal, I had the opportunity to attend a one-day seminar hosted by FranklinCovey. As someone who has been and remains deeply interested in personal and professional productivity, I looked forward to that day. The course walked me through setting up a Franklin Planner and how to use it effectively. You remember those planners ...depending on the size, you perhaps needed a small hand truck to carry it from meeting to meeting. You flipped back and forth between tabs and pockets and then zipped it up and moved to the next meeting (don't even get me started on my transition to the Palm Pilot!).

Unexpectedly, at the beginning of the day, there was a segment on mission statements. We had the opportunity to reflect on who we were as humans, leaders, parents, spouses, etc., and produce first drafts of the qualities that made us unique as people and leaders. We finished the day with a first draft of a mission statement that unleashed years of reflection and work that continues today.

So, if I asked you ...What is your mission?... What would you say? What if you had one elevator ride (think 30-second speech) to tell me why you lead, what your values are and where your passions lie? Do you have a mission statement and your speech ready to go?

Here is why this is so important.

1. As stated in my previous articles, people count on you. I don't know about you, but I want to work for someone who has themselves pretty well figured out.
2. Not all decisions/situations are easy. Often, they require guts, fortitude and courage to stand up and say the right thing or make the right decision in the face of opposition. Do you know what you are willing to stand up for in the face of resistance? What's worth fighting for? This requires someone that has ...pretty well figured out their beliefs and values.
3. You also lead people in your personal life. Often, you make tough decisions, confront family members or hold a child accountable. None of this is fun. But it is equally necessary for you to lead at home, too! The website URL below will lead you to a family mission statement builder.

As a leader of adults and students, you matter! Each day you enter your school, your leadership is tremendously important to those who step into that school looking forward to a great day. Here are three activities (or you can consider them assignments 😊) to move forward with your mission statement:

1. Visit the FranklinCovey website: <https://msb.franklincovey.com/> They have a Mission Statement Builder to start your journey.
2. Another take on a mission statement is what Susan Scott calls a "stump speech." Her excellent book, *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life One Conversation at a Time*, is a must-read for people in the relationship business (and you are!). Susan's stump speech asks the following questions: Where am I going? Why am I going there? Who is going with me? and how am I going to get there? Conduct an internet search for her personal stump speech and you will find someone who has a direction and a mission!



Continued from previous page

- Engage with your family and co-workers regarding your journey toward creating a mission statement. What would they say you believe, stand for and represent? Ask them for feedback as you develop your statement. Keep an eye out for the nouns and verbs as you write and draw meaning from such words.

someone squeezes you, puts pressure on you, or says something unflattering or critical, and out of you comes anger, hatred, bitterness, tension, depression or anxiety, that is what's inside. If love and joy are what you want to give and receive, change your life by changing what's inside" (Dyer, 2013).

Here is an appropriate quote from Dr. Wayne Dyer:

"When you squeeze an orange, you'll always get orange juice to come out. What comes out is what's inside. The same logic applies to you: when

What's inside you will come out. Building a mission statement helps to define you as a human being, a leader and a family person. You know, all that inside stuff! *Good luck on your journey!*

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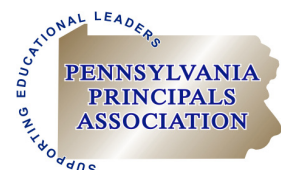
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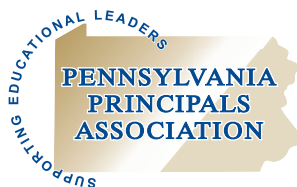
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Paul M. Healey, Ph.D., Receives 2022 Joseph Mamana Meritorious Service Award at LEAD22 Conference



Paul M. Healey, Ph.D., former Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Principals Association, recently received the **2022 Joseph Mamana Meritorious Service Award**. Dr. Healey was presented with the award during the Awards Dinner at the PA Principals Association's LEAD22 Conference on Oct. 16, 2022, at Kalahari Resorts Poconos. This award

recognizes meritorious service to the association, significant contributions to the professional advancement of PA principals and the personal attributes of dedication and commitment to education.

"It is with great pride that I accept the Mamana Award on behalf of the work that we accomplished together (the staff and board) over the last eight years as we positioned the PA Principals Association as a leading educational association in the state and across the country," shared Dr. Healey.

Dr. Healey retired as the Executive Director of the PA Principals Association in August 2021 after eight years in

this position. He spent 43 years in education serving in the role of teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent, adjunct professor and President of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in 2012.

During his tenure as Executive Director, Dr. Healey is credited with increasing professional development opportunities for school leaders, enhancing the voice of the association on the advocacy front, writing and supporting legislation for administrators, partnering with other educational organizations on initiatives, increasing membership and building a sound financial base on which services for members can be rendered. Dr. Healey was recognized in 2020 by Penn State University with the College of Education's Alumni Society Leadership and Service Award.

PA Principals Association Immediate Past President, Dr. Jonathan Ross, said, "Paul Healey is one of the greatest leaders with whom it has been my honor to serve. The consummate professional, Dr. Healey has an unmatched passion for helping our school leaders better serve the children of our commonwealth. This is paired with an incredible vision and skillset that was vital in helping our organization and its members through a very trying period in our nation's history."

Deanne Scott Presented with the 2022 Service to Children Award



Deanne (Dee) Scott, a volunteer and treasurer for the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at Chestnut Hill Elementary School in the Millcreek Township School District (Erie), has received the **2022 Pennsylvania Principals Association's Service to Children Award**. This award is presented annually to individuals, groups or organizations who have

had a broad positive impact on all children in our elementary, middle level and high schools. This year's award recipient was selected from the **West Region** which includes intermediate units: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 27** or **28**. The award was presented to Mrs. Scott during the PA Principals Association LEAD22 Conference at Kalahari Resorts Poconos on October 18, 2022.

In addition to volunteering and serving as the PTA treasurer, Mrs. Scott also coordinates the Scholastic Book Fairs and the Holiday Shop at Chestnut Hill Elementary School. "To me, these projects really give back to the students and the school," she said.

Daniel J. Horan, principal of Haverford Middle School and the award selection committee chair, said, "Deanne Scott's

commitment to Chestnut Hill Elementary School and the Millcreek Township School District is remarkable. Her unwavering dedication as a volunteer and treasurer for the Parent Teacher Association at Chestnut Hill Elementary School ensures that the school's educators, families and students receive exceptional support. Deanne's dedication of time and resources creates a warm and welcoming environment for children, their families, educators and staff."

Nominated for this honor by Chestnut Hill Elementary Principal, Kristen Schaefer, Mrs. Scott has continued to volunteer at Chestnut Hill Elementary long after her children attended the school. She also serves as treasurer for the PTA and coordinates or assists with all school activities. In addition to her time, she spends her own money to ensure Chestnut Hill is a welcoming place for students and families.

According to Mrs. Schaefer, "Dee is an amazingly dedicated individual. Her compassion and sincere commitment to Chestnut Hill Elementary and the Millcreek Township School District is unmatched. She is always here making our school a better place for our students, staff and community! If and when there comes a day that Dee decides to "retire" from volunteering, we will be at a loss. I don't know what I would do without her!"

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The PA Principals Association now offers a total of **26** micro-credentials on pertinent topics for school leaders. You start and complete a micro-credential on your own time and at your own pace. At the completion, you submit a badge to us and we upload your hours to PDE. *This is a great way to earn all of your necessary Act 45 hours!*

What are Micro-Credentials?

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- A Micro-credential is a career-building opportunity. Micro-credentials evidence your career skills and growth in a tangible, highly-visible way. Completing a micro-credential could potentially lead to salary advancement or help you stand out in a pool of job candidates. You can also earn professional development credit toward your licensure requirements.
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Visit our website at www.paprincipals.org to see our full listing of micro-credentials and to register.

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Sunday at sunday@paprincipals.org



Hiring Process

By Dr. Edward J. Smith



About the Author: *Dr. Edward J. Smith is the K-6 Principal at East Vincent Elementary School in the Owen J. Roberts School District in Chester County for the past two years. He has worked in the education field for 28 years. During his career, he has worked in the Fairfax County Public School District in Virginia as an elementary teacher and assistant principal. For the past 19 years, he has lived in Pennsylvania and has served as an elementary school principal in the Daniel Boone, Spring-Ford and Owen J. Roberts Area School Districts.*

Mr. Smith holds a doctoral degree from Widener University, a master's degree from George Mason University and earned his undergraduate degree from The Pennsylvania State University.

Improving Best Practices

Principals have the challenging task of hiring teachers to promote a positive school climate, provide instruction and serve the school's mission. As a result of a lack of robust human resource departments, hiring training and varying hiring practices, principals can miss the mark in selecting quality teachers (Kimbrel, 2019). The current teacher shortages will only add to the challenge principals will face in hiring quality teachers. According to Sutchter, Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas (2016; 2019), district leaders must understand the qualities contributing to teacher effectiveness. The weight of accountability and teacher effectiveness have raised the stakes of the quality of education provided to students. Much attention has been paid to improving teaching quality in the United States (Atteberry, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Jackson, Rockoff & Staiger, 2014).

Furthermore, Klassen (2019) states that effective teaching has become a national education priority. Still, there is little systematic attention to how administrators select prospective teachers for the classroom, whether candidates already hired within a school district or new hires. Several strategies and initiatives have been employed across the nation to close the achievement gap and reverse the declining achievement of American students compared to their global peers. There have been several initiatives, including implementing systems that

increase school district accountability for student learning, improving university academic standards and requiring school districts across the nation to employ highly qualified teachers (Ransdell, 2017). Despite various instructional approaches to decrease the achievement gap of students and increase academic standards, there remains a challenge regarding school district administrators hiring effective teachers.

Many school districts have used their systems for selecting, interviewing and hiring teachers, while others rely on commercial products to assist in recruiting teachers to their districts. This article investigates a different approach to the hiring process of many districts to assess teacher candidates' professional dispositions, interpersonal skills, content knowledge and ability to establish themselves with existing staff.

As most educators know, the topic of dispositions is central to teacher education and educators. Dispositions have been defined as individuals' personal qualities or characteristics, "including attitudes, beliefs, interests, appreciations, values and modes of adjustments" (Taylor & Wasiczko, 2000, p. 5). The following descriptors and terms encompass the concept of dispositions: "adopts, appreciates, believes, is committed to, has enthusiasm, persists, realizes, recognizes, responds, seeks, is sensitive to, understands and values" (Johnston, Wilson & Almerico, 2018, p. 3). These attributes represent dispositions, and individuals behave based on these attributes.

How to conduct the interview process both efficiently and effectively has been the subject of considerable research that has examined such factors as the interview process, prior experience of candidates, formal and informal testing, observation, teacher artifacts and administrator perceptions and observations (Harris, Ingle & Rutledge, 2014). Most, if not all, building and district administrators spend many hours developing an interview process that they feel will yield the best teachers to hire, and this is a crucial role for educational leaders.



Additionally, many think that an essential task of a principal is to hire highly qualified, exceptional staff. Hiring effective educators can increase students' academic growth and accelerate change in the culture and dynamics of a school. A poor hiring decision can result in declining school culture and problems for years to come. In other words, principals must make hiring decisions for teachers one of their top priorities. In addition, much of the current research demonstrates that principals' leadership style and skills impact how they decide which teachers to hire. By way of contrast, research suggests that throughout the hiring process, principals focus heavily on personality and behaviors when selecting teachers and want teachers who are caring, enthusiastic, motivated, honest and emotionally stable (Cannata & Engel, 2012; Harris et al., 2010). Consequently, most principals engage individually developed interview styles that can be based on how administrators were originally hired years earlier. In short, the screening of applicants and the interviewing process are the most important elements of pre-employment decision-making that occur in the hiring process (Lyng, 2009).

I contend that school districts looking to improve their hiring practices should begin by refocusing their efforts on the overall interview process, which could increase the likelihood of improving the effectiveness of the overall teaching staff of a school or district. In May 2022, our school district posted potential openings for elementary positions for the 2022-2023 school year, and we had over 230 applicants. Many schools, including those in some large urban districts, receive more applications for open teaching positions than they have vacancies. Principals no longer have the luxury of consulting a list of applications and choosing a teacher by reviewing paper applications, conducting an interview and recommending a hire. Instead, principals should review pre-hire teacher characteristics, including performance in the job interview or during a demonstration lesson and adopt related screening tools to inform their selection and hiring decisions (Bruno & Strunk, 2019). Cannata et al. (2017) indicated that many districts had adopted screening tools that are intended to be rigorous, such as structured interview protocols or standardized batteries of assessments that provide principals with measures to justify their hiring decisions. At times, principals seek assistance in the teacher selection process, and several commercially created interview tools to assess teacher quality have been available for purchase. A few nationally recognized companies provide school districts the

opportunity to purchase their screening protocols and contract for services their companies offer. Humanex Ventures for Excellence, Gallup Teacher Perceiver, Teacher Quality Index (TQI®), Haberman Star Teacher Pre-screener and TeacherInsight (™) are widely recognized in school settings.

Throughout the current "hiring season," our elementary principal team utilized the services of the Haberman Star Teacher Pre-screener as the first step in our hiring process. We determined the Haberman Star Teacher pre-screener provided us with the dispositional information we felt were key indicators of potential success as a teacher. For example, we reviewed each candidate's strengths in the following areas: persistence, organization and planning, valuing student learning, theory to practice, at-risk students, approach to students, survivability of school bureaucracy, explaining teacher success, explaining student

success and fallibility. The candidate attains a particular score in each category, which is tallied for an overall score. We utilized the candidates who scored the highest and invited them to the next phase of the interview process.

The next phase of the interview process involved inviting the top 75 candidates to a Zoom pre-screener interview. The interview consisted of four main questions: **1)** "Tell us something you recently learned to do outside of teaching children?" **2)** "What is the biggest challenge you've faced in your current position, previous role or during student teaching? How did you overcome this challenge?" **3)** "What makes teaching enjoyable and motivating for you?" **4)** "Are you willing to consider

a long-term substitute position or a building substitute role." Once again, these questions gave the team insights into the candidate's disposition. The team reviewed our data collection and invited the successful candidates for a structured 20-minute interview. The traditional structured interview provided the team the data needed to determine the candidate's ability to communicate clearly, knowledge of content, curriculum, planning, situational scenarios and relationship building with all stakeholders. Next, the successful candidates were invited to conduct demonstration lessons with age/grade-level-appropriate students. These demonstration lessons provided the team with clear evidence of a candidate's abilities to form quick relationships with students, content knowledge, lesson planning, communication and how they react to student performance.

The final phase of the interview involves the entire principal team discussing their building needs and which candidate is the best match for the building's needs. The successful candidate is then invited to interview with a central office administrator to ensure the candidate is the right match for

“**Principals no longer have the luxury of consulting a list of applications and choosing a teacher by reviewing paper applications, conducting an interview and recommending a hire.”**

Amy Balsbaugh is Recipient of the Kades-Margolis Corporation's 2022 Mini-Grant Award



Amy Balsbaugh, principal at John R. Bonfield Elementary School in the Warwick School District, is the recipient of the **Kades-Margolis Corporation's 2022 Mini-Grant Award**. She was honored at the recipient of the mini-grant at the PA Principals Association's LEAD22 Conference at Kalahari Resorts Poconos on Monday, Oct. 17, 2022.

The mini-grant is awarded annually to a current and practicing elementary principal who is also a member of the PA Principals Association. This one-time award of \$1,000 may be used to enhance the member's elementary school and the children it serves.

According to Mrs. Balsbaugh, funding from the Kades-Margolis Mini-Grant will be used to support community visits via school bus by the teachers and staff who will spend an afternoon traveling through neighborhoods sharing popsicles and back-to-school supplies (ear buds, water bottles, backpacks), and engaging with students and families. The goal of the project is to meet students

on their "home turf" to involve more families in the back-to-school meet up, removing the barrier of needing to come to the school to participate in *Popsicles with the Principal*.

"We are so thankful to receive this funding. It allows us to use creative and innovative ideas to connect with students that would not be possible without this financial support. We are excited to see the impact it has on positive connections to start the school year," said Mrs. Balsbaugh.



John R. Bonfield Elementary teachers and staff travel to neighborhoods sharing popsicles and back-to-school supplies with students.

Karen Hodge Honored with the 2022 Bob D. Schiller Memorial Cancer Research and Support Award

Principal, Karen Hodge, and Lorane Elementary School in the Exeter School District (Reading), received the **2022 Bob D. Schiller Memorial Cancer Research and Support Award** (sponsored by Lincoln Investment Planning, LLC) at the PA Principals Association's LEAD22 Conference at the Kalahari Resorts Poconos on Oct. 17, 2022. They were selected for this honor for their fundraiser, "**Whitney's Play-Doh Drive**." Instituted in 2007, the **Bob D. Schiller Memorial Cancer Research and Support Award** is designed to provide monetary assistance to schools that promote programs that support cancer research and the survivors of cancer.

Third-grade teacher, Josie Whitney, has coordinated a Play-Doh drive for seven years where cans of Play-Doh are collected for the children to enjoy while receiving cancer treatment at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Mrs. Whitney had a student whose three-year-old brother was diagnosed with cancer and sadly passed away. After speaking with his mother, she learned that he loved playing with Play-Doh during his hospital stays, but CHOP was always in need of cans of Play-Doh as it cannot be sanitized and is tossed after a single use.

"Mrs. Whitney was humbled to find out I had submitted her program for this grant. My goal is for Mrs. Whitney and our school to double last year's total," shared Mrs. Hodge. "Mrs.

Whitney raised over 12,000 cans of Play-Doh this year, and over seven years, she's collected more than 22,000 cans with the help of the Lorane staff, students and community," she said.

According to Dr. Maureen Letcher, PA Principals Association President, "Choosing an award recipient was difficult this year as there were many organizations doing amazing things for others. Lorane Elementary's program stood out due to helping young children cope with cancer through playing with Play-Doh. We believe any activity that can help soothe and distract a child who is going through a tough time should be supported and commended."



Third-grade teacher, Mrs. Whitney, and Lorane Elementary students with the Play-Doh collected for the children at CHOP.

REFLECT: Lessons Learned for New and Experienced Principals from the First Year in the Principal's Chair

By Dr. Susan M. Sibert and Dr. Miles O'Shea



About the Authors: Susan M. Sibert, D.Ed., is a Professor and Coordinator of the Administration and Leadership Studies Doctoral and Principal Certification Programs at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is a former public-school principal and director of curriculum and federal programs. She welcomes comments and collaborations at smsibert@iup.edu

Dr. Sibert received the PA Principals Association's 2020 Manchester Award for Excellence in Journalism.

Dr. Miles O'Shea is the Principal of Titusville Middle School in the Titusville Area School District where he has served for just over one year. He earned his doctoral degree in education, curriculum and instruction, from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, with research interests in social and emotional learning and emotional intelligence. He resides in Meadville with his wife and three young children.

Whether you are a new or newer principal or an experienced leader new to a school or school district, taking time to reflect on leadership during a finite period of time is valuable to future leadership goals. This article shares insights from the first year in the principal's chair from a current middle school principal and a former elementary school principal. And despite attempting to follow the common leadership rule of not making any major changes that first year, in reflecting, we found that seven main lessons were learned, some easier than others. Reflecting on the lessons we learned could help new principals, but also experienced principals might appreciate revisiting some of our realizations.

R – Relationships

The first and most important task is to form relationships with stakeholders – like students, educators, parents and community members – in an attempt to learn about the varied expectations and values. Trust is the ultimate goal of building these interpersonal relationships with constituents. Strong, trusting relationships are only built over an extended period of time, so patience and consistency are imperative during the process.

Relationships are critical to the success of a school (Fullan, 2002; Seashore Louis & Murphy, 2017). Make building relationships with constituents the primary focus in the first year while recognizing that it takes time to build trust. We found the practice of building positive, trusting relationships with constituents to be rewarding and time well-spent. As trusting relationships are established and strengthened, the principal becomes part of the school community. When the principal is trusted and accepted, difficult decisions can be made within a climate of trust, which Covey (2006) believes is the single most important factor influential leaders need to form relationships.



E – Experiential Learning

Embrace experiential learning. This concept might be tough to accept as a leader of a school who is faced with making a multitude of decisions, sometimes quickly. During the first year leading a school, there are many things that must be learned through daily work and living the experiences. This is particularly true in the first months of being in a new position and gaining understanding of schedules, names and calendars. If you are a list maker, planner or scheduler, experiential learning may be hard to take. Accept the fact that mistakes will be made, and from those errors, learning and growth will result. Furthermore, professional learning communities can combat the feelings of loneliness and isolation that may occur those first years in the principal's seat. Seek mentors both inside and outside

your school system, as well as professional development, where you can ask questions and share experiences.

F – Faith

Have faith in yourself. Be confident while you are going through first-year trials and know you will be challenged. Leadership expert, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (2004), calls confidence, “A sweet spot between arrogance and despair.” She believes “Arrogance involves the failure to see any flaws or weaknesses, despair the failure to acknowledge any strengths” (p. 8). New principals have reached their positions for good reason and should remember that others have shown confidence in them. Principals, even newer ones, must then display that confidence to the constituents they serve.

Remember that there will be hard times and better times. Some days will be downright impossible, and others will remind you of why you became an educator in the first place. Know that you will question the decision to move into the principalship, asking yourself if you should have stayed in your previous position. But stay the course, be steadfast in your decisions and remain focused on your mission and goals. Allow your mission to serve as a beacon, keeping you on course despite adversity.

L – Listen and Learn

Learn as much as you can as fast as you can. Be a sponge and take in everything, everyone and the big picture as well as details of the school and the position. Effective principals are good listeners (Brezicha, Ikoma, Park & LeTendre, 2020; Sezgin & Er, 2016; Wang & Degol, 2016). In order to determine the needs of the school community, as well as the larger community that the school serves, ask: What is important to the people in this community? What is the culture and vision of the community? What is valued? Before making decisions, principals should know the answers to these questions.

As new principals listen, they are learning about the values and needs of everyone. When the time comes, this learning will be invaluable during the change process which will eventually come.

E - Expect the unexpected

There is no way to be prepared for everything, so accept that you will be learning along the way and know situations are going to come your way that you cannot control. When the unexpected happens, rely on your network of trusted advisors and mentors who helped you on your journey to the principalship and who can now offer advice when you encounter new or uncomfortable situations. As experience within your new position increases, so will your network of advisors, whom you can turn to during unexpected events that are sure to come your way.

Know that as you work through the calendar, you will come to learn what to expect each month and be able to better plan your time according to the demands of the position. The second year will seem more familiar and the third year you can settle into an expected routine. “That feeling of efficacy, of being in charge of circumstances, is the essence of confidence” (Kantar, 2004, p. 61).

C – Change

Despite the old adage of not making too many changes too fast that first year, some new principals may not have that luxury, particularly if you were hired to transform a school. If you do have time prior to enacting changes, take advantage of the time by gathering facts and making judgments about where change is most needed. In order to gain buy-in, a shared vision must be enacted (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Kearney & Herrington, 2010). It is certainly wise not to change too much too fast, but new administrators must also have the ability to address structures that are unjust or detrimental to the culture of the school. The ability to assess and adapt will demonstrate leadership and courage, as school leaders do what is best for the students they serve. Focus on listening and learning before making changes. If you must make changes, attempt to make smaller changes first that may lead to bigger changes later.

T – Traditions

Traditions of the school are important to stakeholders. Take time to learn about and understand the school and district traditions. What seems unfamiliar and time-consuming to a new principal, or principal new to a school, might be long-held traditions close to the heart of generations of students, parents and grandparents. School traditions that have meaning for students and staff are best served by understanding and honoring traditions that are often embedded within the community.

Embarking on the first year of a principalship is not easy. The literature and principal certification programs serve as guides that can assist new principals through that first school year. However, reflection, both in the short-term and long-term, is also essential for school leaders as they enter the principal's chair with the goal of effectively leading school communities. While reflecting on the lessons learned from the first year as a principal, it is apparent that the position is as challenging as it is rewarding. We have found that new principals should embrace the change, stay true to their mission and learn as much as they can while they reflect on their daily, monthly and year-long experiences.

For further information, please contact the authors: Dr. Sibert at smsibert@iup.edu or Dr. O'Shea at moshea@gorockets.org

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Hiring Process

Continued from page 15

the district and provides an opportunity for the candidate to fully understand the organization they are potentially participating in for their teaching career.

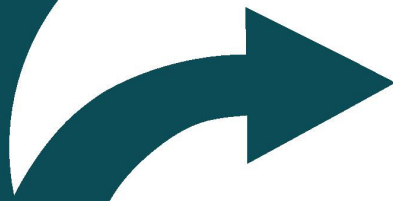
As a result of making changes to our hiring process, the elementary principals felt that we recommended the best candidates for the available teaching positions in our schools. By adding dispositional interviewing techniques, pre-screener surveys, pre-screening interviews, conducting traditionally structured interviews, demonstration lessons with students and final interviews with district

administrators, we could hire high-quality educators. Lastly, it is a blessing to be able to work in a district that provides opportunities to evaluate an existing process that has been effective and to try a different approach to hiring educators. Most administrators know that the hiring process is only the beginning of maintaining a climate and culture of high-performance, student-centered, family-oriented schools.

For more information, please contact Dr. Smith at edsmith@ojrsd.net

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Why Leadership Matters in Establishing a Culture of Social, Emotional and Academic Learning

By Dennis Best and Michelle Gill



About the Authors: Dennis Best is the Assistant to the Superintendent for Schools and Students Services in the Centennial School District in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He has also served as a fifth-grade teacher, a middle school assistant principal, a middle school principal and as a high school principal. He holds degrees from West Chester University (B.S. in elementary education), Temple University (M.Ed. in curriculum, instruction and technology in education), Gwynedd-Mercy University (M.Ed. in educational leadership) and Arcadia University (Ed.D. in educational leadership).

Michelle Gill serves as the Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL) Coordinator for the Centennial School District in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Delaware and a master's degree in education from Saint Joseph's University. She has worked in education for over 20 years in The School District of Philadelphia and Fairfax County Public Schools.

Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL)

Despite our best efforts, there are some things we all know but fail to act on proactively. Educational leaders have long been aware of the need to consistently address students' social, emotional and academic learning (SEAL) needs. However, due to educational leaders' many hats, this recognized need was more frequently addressed in pockets than across school organizations. The impact of the pandemic only accelerated our collective desire to strengthen SEAL support. A recent report published by the United States Government Accountability Office (2022) highlights this impact as seen during the 2020-21 school year:

Nearly two-thirds of teachers (61 percent) had more students who showed signs of emotional distress than in a typical year. In addition, among those teachers who had students who made less academic progress compared to a typical year, the vast majority said social or emotional issues were a contributing factor to the lack of progress. These issues were especially common in high school.

Anticipating those increased needs, the Centennial School District's (CSD) leadership team sought to evaluate and potentially refine the systems and practices used to support students' social and emotional wellness throughout the district. Therefore, in the spring of 2021, the CSD Board of School Directors approved a new position to lead this work – a Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL) Coordinator. In contrast to the more widely used acronym SEL, SEAL reflects CSD's organizational stance that social and emotional learning is as important as, and supports, academic learning (Durlak et al., 2011).

SEAL Coordination – Who Owns the Work?

Dedicating SEAL coordination to a new position, instead of adding it to a previously existing position, reflects the district's commitment to sustaining this work. Adding school- or district-level coordination to a current position would have served as irony, considering the impact it could have on the social and emotional well-being of the designated employee, as well as potentially setting the initiative up for failure. Further, housing the position within CSD's Schools and Student Services department created the potential for systemic impact through district-level coordination of evidence-based K-12 SEAL practices.

This action represented an intentional organizational shift for CSD. Previously, well-intended approaches to social-emotional learning existed in some classrooms and pockets of schools. While that addressed the needs of some students, this approach no longer aligned with our understanding of SEAL as a universal, Tier-1 approach, nor did it reflect CSD's commitment to equity in educational opportunities for all students.

Adding and staffing the SEAL coordinator position was CSD's initial step toward better addressing its students' social, emotional and academic needs. The next, and equally critical step, was soliciting the buy-in of the district's building level administrators to support the SEAL coordinator in carrying out this work – building shared ownership of SEAL implementation. Again, without the

“**Adding and staffing the SEAL coordinator position was CSD's initial step toward better addressing its students' social, emotional and academic needs.”**

support of the building-level administrators, the intended student outcomes would not be attainable.

Principal “buy-in” and collaboration with the SEAL coordinator are critical to this process as they set an organizational culture in their school that impacts the school’s climate.

Organizational Culture

Principals are responsible for constructing the organizational norms by which school constituents are expected to interact. This includes preferred modes of communication, shared priorities and behavioral etiquette. To become pervasive, principals must model these norms and encourage school community members to abide by these expectations consistently. Established organizational cultures ultimately become the fabric of a school (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010).

Simply put, when principals “own” SEAL, eliciting staff “buy-in” and subsequently permeating the practice throughout the school’s culture is a likely outcome.

School Climate

Principals who establish an organizational culture of respectful behavior by modeling respectful interactions with the constituents of their schools enhance the school climate. In such instances, the principal values teachers and students, and the resulting climate of respect encapsulates the interactions between teachers and students (Koth, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2008).

School cultures and climates characterized by trust, respect, engagement, high expectations and supportive practices create the necessary conditions for students to continuously develop and practice practical social and emotional skills (Louis et al., 2010).

What Does SEAL Implementation Look Like in Schools for Leaders?

Establishing a SEAL Coordinator position has provided relief and support for CSD’s principals in better-addressing students’ social, emotional and academic needs. The SEAL Coordinator can:

- Dedicate the time necessary to gather stakeholder input and lead the development of a district-wide comprehensive SEAL plan.
- Collaborate with principals to transparently share the plan’s why, how and what.
- Articulate a systematic process for implementation, data collection and progress monitoring.
- Maintain alignment between SEAL goals and implementation steps, *Pennsylvania’s Career Ready Skills* (<https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Safe%20Schools/PA%20Career%20Ready%20Skills/PA%20CRS%20Introduction.pdf>) and existing district priorities. Design and facilitate professional learning to provide clarity and develop SEAL practices for leadership, staff and community members.

In this arrangement, the requirements of principals are limited to sharing their leadership in demonstrating the importance of the initiative, subsequently eliciting the “buy-in” of staff and recursive collaboration with the SEAL coordinator.

Systemic SEAL implementation is easily doable at the building level for principals when structured in this meaningful and collaborative way. Especially when juxtaposed with the unfortunate recipe for unsuccessful initiative implementation that is all too common in school districts – adding to principals’ already overburdened plates by asking them to lead work that may not be in their wheelhouse independently.

Practical/Concrete Examples Practitioners Can Use Tomorrow to Infuse These Practices Into Their Organization’s Culture

In districts with or without a SEAL coordinator, leaders can leverage high-impact, low-maintenance practices to intentionally shape organizational culture and school climate – creating the conditions for social, emotional and academic learning to flourish.

➤ Cultivate One’s Social-Emotional Competency:

- Use a personal SEL reflection, like the one provided by CASEL (<https://schoolguide.casel.org/resource/adult-sel-self-assessment/>), to build familiarity with your SEL competencies. Self-awareness, self-management strategies and effective relationship skills provide protective factors that can increase leaders’ resilience and allow leaders to model effective SEL skills in interactions with staff, students and family members throughout the school day (Mahfouz, Greenberg & Rodriguez, 2019).
- Self-management strategies like taking a deep breath or pausing to allow a moment to process during interactions, model effective self-regulation and enhance your ability to respond rather than react. Modeling this in everyday interactions also communicates that others can do the same, potentially impacting many in the school community.
- Giving others the gift of your full attention through active listening models a crucial social and emotional skill and conveys the message that you value the person or persons in front of you. In addition, the positive ripple effect of this practice on an organization’s culture is far-reaching as staff mirror the practice with one another and among students.

➤ Prioritize Belonging and Relational Trust:

- Begin conversations and staff meetings with a brief inclusive opening such as, “what is a

success you've experienced recently?" If you are with a small group, invite all members to share. For a large group, create groups of 4-6 people to share among themselves.

- Create a calendar reminder system that prompts you to have a brief check-in with each staff member throughout the year, with specific students undergoing challenges, or with new students. Use this quick conversation, email or phone call for good news, avoiding task-related school topics.
- Notice and acknowledge what is going well. This does not need to be tied to a big incentives program or public ceremony. It can be as simple as including it as part of a conversation or email or on a sticky note left on a desk that lets the person know that what they did is valued: "You put a lot of effort into that project!"

or "Your team's collaboration is fun to see in action and shows in your work with students."

We anticipate that the increased prioritization of students' social, emotional and academic learning needs over the last two years will become a sustained component of K-12 education. However, there can be a wide space between mere prioritization and students' improved social, emotional and academic outcomes. School leaders have the potential to create a clear path through that space with their support for implementation steps and the robust and positive climate and culture they set.

Located in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, the Centennial School District comprises Warminster Township, Upper Southampton Township and Ivyland Borough, serving approximately 5,300 students in grades K-12. For additional information, please contact the authors at bestde@centennialsd.org or gillmi@centennialsd.org

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In addition, authors **MUST include a written statement of any connection to the publication being reviewed.**

The deadline to submit a book review for the next magazine is December 15, 2022.

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“Listen to me! Connect with me!”

A case for the purposeful creation of classroom communities

By Heather A. Piperato



About the Author: Heather A. Piperato serves as the Director of Secondary Education in the East Stroudsburg Area School District. She has served as high school principal, middle school principal, assistant principal and social studies teacher in five different counties in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Piperato is a certified Restorative Practices trainer and has written this article despite the fact that she should be finishing her doctoral dissertation on *Secondary School Principals' Responses to the Process of State Mandated School Improvement Planning*.

Most researchers agree that humans are hardwired to live in community, that we feel the need to be in relationship with others at a neural level (Eisenberger & Cole, 2012). When humans interact with each other as healthy members of a group, they develop a sense of belonging that provides the psychological stability to learn and grow (Allen, Gray, Baumeister & Leary, 2022; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Teaching children how to live in community with each other is a necessary skill that has been a part of informal education for years and has traditionally been the purview of both family and school. The daily environment of home and school provides the necessary backdrop for teachable moments, using students' lived experiences to ingrain good habits of community living.

Obstacles to Teaching Community

This learning has not been without external obstacles. Children develop at different rates and so may master these skills according to a timeline different from what we may require in schools. The amount and type of support that families are able or willing to give has decreased. External mandates such as standardized testing afford less time for teachers to impart life lessons. Socioeconomics can affect student access to models of healthy communities and unhealthy groups can compete with our message of acceptable school behavior.



Perhaps unsurprisingly, programs and practices within our very own educational environment contain impediments to our efforts.

Programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) focus on teaching students expected behaviors and rewarding them for it for the good of the whole community but are not designed to help teachers purposefully create community in their classrooms. In Pennsylvania's teacher evaluation instrument, Domain 1b "Demonstrating knowledge of students" expects teachers to know students individually but omits the need to deal with student-to-student relationships in the classroom apart from managing conflict. Organizationally, we continue to group students by ability level even when we know these practices "reduce student interaction and have negative effects on peer relationships" (Osterman, 2000) and whole group lecture is still the predominant form of teaching at the secondary level, a form that emphasizes student silence.

Despite the current preoccupation with developing a sense of community within schools, discussion of developing collegiality among students themselves is often missing, with the major emphasis placed on improving the nature of relationships either among adults or between adults and students (Osterman, 2000).

The Added Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

As if this were not enough, in 2020 and 2021 medical and cultural emergencies collided to the great detriment of children. Some responses to the COVID-19 pandemic severely

Continued on next page

limited child access to the physical environments in which we embedded these lessons. Even when limited access was granted, health and safety rules created a distant, artificial, even fearful community. Other responses to the pandemic introduced students to new rules of an online community very quickly with no guidance and little ability to reinforce positive or negative behavior in this space. Widespread media coverage of a polarized political climate exposed many students to negative, strident, mean voices that highlighted how NOT to live in community (Kleemans, de Leeuw, Gerritsen & Buijzen, 2017). Racial inequities, long present in our country, resurfaced and again media coverage emphasized people behaving badly in community rather than highlighting the efforts of many to heal and restore their communities.

District Data that Informs the Problem

It should come as no surprise then that the 2021-2022 academic year was replete with symptoms of students who felt disconnected from community and no longer knew how to live in it. In our district alone:

1. Discipline offenses increased in number and severity at all 10 schools.
2. Nearly 50 students, an unprecedented number, had behavior so egregious to the community that they were excluded from it for a whole school year.
3. For the third cycle in a row, our #1 risk factor on the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) was “Low commitment to school” and the percentage of students INCREASED to 60%, the highest in the last six years.
4. To the open-ended question, “How could we have made your high school experience better?”, the Class of 2022 responded almost universally with two themes: “Listen to us” and “Connect with us.”

Sample Answers to Senior Survey Question #20:

- *“Make people feel welcomed and that school isn’t a prison.”*
- *“Try listening to them.”*
- *“Understand the students better instead of judging them for who they are.”*
- *“Get more involved with students, reach out to them one on one.”*
- *“Building an actual relationship with students to encourage them to do their work.”*
- *“Be there for them when they need you. If they don’t get something don’t freak out just help them.”*
- *“Tell your teachers not to answer with “you should know this” when students ask for help. We don’t know and that’s why we’re here.”*
- *“Have more one-on-one conversations with students.”*

This data seems to indicate that a large majority of students don’t feel heard and don’t feel like they fit into our school community. It is not surprising that they are behaving in a way that reflects this but also consider three other pieces of data:

1. Our pre- and post-student climate surveys at all four secondary schools indicate a highly positive relationship between students and teachers but a negative relationship between students and students.
2. Despite differences between principals, Domain 3b “Using questioning and discussion techniques” achieves the lowest average score nearly every year on teacher evaluation instruments. Principals at the secondary level further report that few teachers routinely hold discussions, and many teachers use whole group questioning exclusively and at a Depth of Knowledge (DoK) level of 1. Translation: students rarely talk in our classrooms and if they do, they aren’t talking to each other.
3. *Wellness Wednesdays*, instituted this year at the secondary level to help students with their socio-emotional needs, was so unsuccessful it will not return. Teachers reported that they didn’t feel equipped to talk to students in groups about personal things and many of them didn’t feel it was their job to do so.

Without these last pieces of data, we are tempted to ignore root cause and focus on explicitly teaching replacement behaviors so students don’t disrupt the community (“Let’s make students fill out the restorative questions in ISS [In School Suspension] and have them reflect with someone trained in Restorative Practices”) or focus on making students feel good about themselves and their school so they’ll want to be a part of the school community (“Let’s make teachers greet every student with a unique handshake, like I saw on social media!”).

A Focus on the Root Cause

Neither of these suggestions are necessarily wrong or bad. But taken alone, they completely miss the root of the problem: that even though our students feel loved and supported by our teachers, our students don’t know how to live in community with each other because we aren’t giving them the opportunity for guided practice in our classrooms. By omission, we are instead giving them unsupervised practice in our hallways, our lunchrooms and our buses and then writing them up when they break community standards.

Purposefully creating community in our classrooms serves multiple purposes:

1. It creates the psychological feeling of belonging that students need to cognitively handle the academic content and application we expect of them.

Continued from previous page

Creating community is a pressing concern that is directly tied to student academic achievement.

2. It creates a sense of accountability between students that goes beyond the relationship with the teacher. The desire to maintain mutually beneficial relationships in the classroom community can curb unacceptable behavior without teacher intervention and when internalized, can translate to healthy community behaviors outside of the classroom.
Creating community is a pressing concern that is directly tied to student behavior.

Only when we focus our solutions on developing teachers' ability to create communities of learners in their classrooms, will we begin to see both a reduction in student symptoms (bad behavior and increased SEL needs) and an increase in student academic achievement.

Some notes of caution in a 2022 context:

1. Creating a sense of belonging for students is largely a Tier I practice and is not designed to address the trauma that some of our students' experience. Continued efforts in trauma-informed care must be made to address the Tier II and Tier III needs of our students.
2. Like any widespread effort, implementation design is crucial to ultimate success and every good educational design **MUST** begin with alignment to other district goals. Do not add this on as one more thing and expect it to succeed. Be judicious in the amount of work you set out for your teachers, especially after these past two years.

For more information or to collaborate with the author on **how** to help teachers create communities of learners, please contact her at heather-piperato@esasd.net

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Tracie Michalowski	North Allegheny SD	Ryan Soden	Montrose Area SD
Megan Moffett	Elizabethtown Area SD	Charlene Walter	Wilson SD

IN MEMORIAM

In the fall issue, we have been listing members who have passed away during the year (or since we've been notified of their passing). If you have information about a member who has passed away in the past year, please contact the Anita Quagliani, Director of Membership & Finance, at quagliani@papprincipals.org

Edward Colebank, Retired Secondary Principal, Albert Gallatin School District

Albert D. Erb, Sr., Retired Principal, Colonial School District
Elementary member since 1970. Mr. Erb served as President of the PA Association of Elementary School Principals (PAESP) in 1976. He served the Association in many capacities.

Bart V. Giacometti, Retired Principal, Old Forge School District
Member since 1984.

Sean Hughes, Principal, Lower Merion HS, Lower Merion School District
Secondary member since 2013.

Martin Kaverman, Sr., Retired Secondary Principal, Millcreek Township School District

Brian R. McFeeley, Principal, Mt. Lebanon HS, Mt. Lebanon School District
Secondary member since 2000.

The PA Principals Association extends condolences to the families.

Please note: We can only report a member's passing if we are notified in the state office.

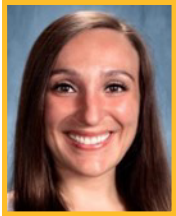
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Safety and Security and its Interaction with Technology: Implications for 21st-Century School Leaders

By Dr. Timothy Stoops and Dianntha McCaughtry



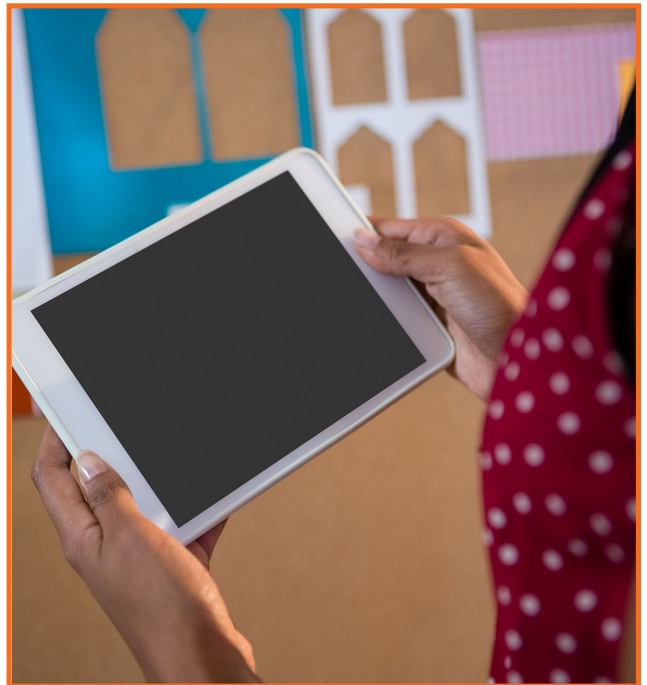
About the Authors: **Dr. Timothy Stoops** is the Director of Assessment and Alternative Learning in Millcreek Township School District in Erie, Pennsylvania. He also oversees safety and security in his current role. Dr. Stoops has served as an assistant principal, principal, alternative education administrator and director of secondary education. He has classroom experience in modern languages and English education.

Dianntha McCaughtry is an Assistant Principal in Millcreek Township School District in Erie, Pennsylvania. She has extensive classroom teacher experience as a literacy educator, social studies teacher and instructional coach. Ms. McCaughtry has served as an administrator in charter-school and public-school capacities.

School leaders today employ a wide range of strategies, practices, procedures and training to ensure the safety of every child and staff member who walks through their school doors each day. There are essential and compelling reasons to do so, most notably regarding school shootings. *Education Week* has been tracking school shooting data for the past four years, and their data indicates that there have been 119 school shootings since 2018 (“School Shootings This Year,” 2022). Increased focus and prioritization of school safety and security are due in part to the fact that acts of violence can occur in any district at any time. According to the School Superintendents Association, “Violence can happen anywhere, and schools must remain prepared to respond and to protect students and staff in our free and open society. Overwhelmingly, schools are safe and nurturing places for students, and school administrators are dedicated to making sure schools remain safe learning environments for all students” (AASA, 2022). The spotlight on safety and security in schools has gained significant attention over the past two decades, primarily in the aftermath of the Columbine High School shooting. Before this, safety and security focused mainly on anti-theft and vandalism and eventually evolved into concern for teachers to its current state of students and staff.

With the onset of school shootings and school violence, safety and security are a top priority today. Technological advances have also gained prominence in the discussion of proactively preventing violent acts in today’s schools. Surveillance camera monitoring, online student monitoring systems, door monitoring devices and school software systems are just a few examples of emerging technologies that are being embraced by school districts to ensure student and staff safety. For school administrators, sifting through such an array of options can be arduous. There are no easy answers and are often complicated by the challenges of appropriating money to support technology and safety.

A case study of one school district’s embrace of technology to assist in safety and security is presented here to purposefully examine the implementation process, emphasizing intended and unintended outcomes. The Millcreek Township School District (MTSD), located in Erie, Pennsylvania, partnered with an online student safety monitoring company. This student safety program monitors all Google-related student accounts, from Google searches to Google Docs. Student email is also monitored via this system. It should be noted that this program monitors district-issued technology and district-created accounts, not students’ personal emails, social media accounts, etc. This program simultaneously supports school safety, students’ safety and mental health by monitoring students’ online behaviors in real-time. A core member of the company’s team will contact school officials when a student’s online activities are flagged by showing signs of self-harm, depression, thoughts of suicide, substance abuse, cyberbullying, unhealthy relationships and credible threats of violence against others. One important aspect of technology for student safety is their privacy practices and policies. This company complied with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educa-



Continued on next page

tion Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines and was one of the first companies to sign the Student Privacy Pledge.

Additionally, the company maintains clear terms regarding how they treat student and staff data. Year after year, they have pledged to reinforce their commitment to privacy by aligning with the Future of Privacy Forum (FPF) and the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) to advance data privacy protection regarding the collection, use and maintenance of personal information. These technologies also bring to question the legality of monitoring students' behaviors beyond the school day; because the safety program would only be monitoring district-provided technology and district-created accounts, any inappropriate or questionable content would fall under the district's acceptable use policies within their Student Code of Conduct whether the activity is occurring during or beyond the school day. While inappropriate content may result in some form of disciplinary action, technology allows school personnel to assess students' needs and provide them with appropriate resources such as counseling services.

In addition to privacy, equity must be at the forefront of investigating potential student situations. The example company that we have referenced has embedded algorithms to combat discrimination issues and maintain equity within their program. The company's team will even go so far as to adjust the algorithms based on school district personnel feedback on potential biases of student groups. However, the response to such flags relies on the school personnel's abilities to uphold that equity. Creating negative attention to over-vigilance and reaction to students based on race, gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background causes far more short- and long-term negativity with significant consequences.

An anticipated outcome of this technology adoption was being mindful of the reaction of parents and students. Overwhelmingly, the parent support of the program was evident from day one of implementation. Fortunately, even in cases rated as requiring immediate action, few required it. For example, one student had emailed a peer and stated that she failed a chapter test and wanted to kill herself. After investigation, it was determined that the student was using inflammatory language to their friend with no real intent. However, in another instance, a student opened a document in Google Docs they created at the beginning of the school

year before the technology implementation. The student who created the Google Doc had no prior troubled history and had only been to the office a handful of times for minor infractions. However, the Google Doc contained several concerning words and phrases, which were immediately flagged, and the document was sent to administration for review. The content of the Google Doc brought to light a number of mental health and other concerns relative to abuse, self-harm, suicidal ideations and more, prompting immediate contact with the student's parents. Now, the student and their family are receiving counseling services, and the student is making significant improvements. The vast majority of parents were grateful for the school official notifying them and for the technology. Students were ambivalent about this implementation. In some instances, students appreciated the concern for their well-being. Other times, they believed that the district was being too overbearing and intrusive.

It is important to note that the student monitoring system observes student online behavior 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And again, it monitors only student district

accounts, not accounts that students hold privately on forums such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, etc. In understanding the monitoring complexity of the school day and beyond, districts must have a firm protocol regarding how flagged student activity will be addressed. This also addresses one of the unintended consequences. There must be a clear internal protocol regarding what school personnel will be involved beyond the school day. Because notifications could come at any hour of the day or evening, a protocol that emphasizes collaboration is far more effective than one in isolation in addressing potentially serious student situations.

Implementing technology in schools takes careful thought and consideration. Schools must first develop specificity and purpose to what they hope technology can

accomplish to understand how technology can impact safety and security. For example, schools must outwardly embrace and be transparent to the philosophy and practice that emotional and physical safety in school is directly related to academic performance and emotional well-being. The school's vision and approach must support these vital beliefs. Clearly stated, it is well-documented that students who feel safe perform better and are less prone or susceptible to their emotional and social health being compromised. Technology alone cannot replace or subvert the importance of teachers and staff interacting with students each day. When considering school-wide efforts to promote

“While inappropriate content may result in some form of disciplinary action, technology allows school personnel to assess students' needs and provide them with appropriate resources such as counseling services.”

safety, the National Association of School Psychologists recommends addressing the continuum of needs and services that lead to improved safety, well-being and learning for children and youth (NASP, 2013). However, monitoring students' experiences, beliefs and challenges is daunting. With the advent of new technologies, these endeavors can be more manageable for school leaders. Schools that use planned, systematic techniques for gathering information on threats, for example, may be well-positioned to receive tips on planned attacks and respond appropriately. With the arrival of numerous technologies associated with safety and technology, schools can better equip themselves to counter school violence and create physically safe and secure

spaces for the building and emotionally safe and secure spaces for staff and students.

Embracing technology and incorporating it into school safety and security is emerging in its presence and capacity to help keep schools safe. Incorporating such measures requires careful calculation for optimum benefit. There is no greater challenge or responsibility in keeping students and staff safe. Selecting the appropriate resource involves time investment and careful planning. Schools need to embrace such mindfulness in their efforts to ensure an optimum safe learning environment.

For further information, please contact the authors at stoops@mtsd.org or mccaughtry@mtsd.org

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Dr. Haldeman, Dr. Patschke, Dr. Indeglio & Dr. Ross are PA Principals Association Board Members and Practicing Administrators.

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We Ditched our Staff Handbook!

By Nathan Kryptavich



About the Author: **Nathan Kryptavich** is in his third year as an Assistant Principal at Delaware Valley High School in the Delaware Valley School District in Milford, Pennsylvania. Prior to his current position, Mr. Kryptavich was an educator for 17 years, teaching music and orchestra at both the elementary and secondary levels. He is also a doctoral student in the educational leadership program at Wilkes University.

Scrolling through my Twitter feed last July, I came across Kelly Jones' (@kjones_m) tweet about ditching her staff handbook in favor of creating a "Hub" (Jones, 2021). Instead of revising, printing and copying the traditional document to hand out at the beginning of the school year, she created and distributed an online version of the handbook in the form of a Google Sheet. This document was organized in columns by category with cells that contained hyperlinks to related documents. Ms. Jones attributed this idea to a blogpost written by Stephanie McConnell (@principalsteph1) and Brent Coley (@brentcoley) and adapted it from a Google Doc to a Google Sheet.

Inspired by what these principals developed for their buildings, I collaborated with my high school administrative team to create a Hub of our own for the 2021-2022 school year, and it has been an effective tool in curating information for our teachers and support staff. In addition to saving reams of paper, this online document was revised on an as-needed basis, providing our personnel with real-time, up-to-date content. The Hub has become a one-stop-shop for our teachers to check schedules, calendars, duty rosters, evaluation rubrics and other resources from which they pull information on a regular basis throughout the school year.

Just before the beginning of the school year, everyone on our high school team received an email introducing the Hub's purpose and a link to access the cloud-based document. Cells shaded in gray contained links to pages that were part of the original teacher handbook that everyone was expected to review. We also configured Google share settings so that our entire staff could view the Hub and the related documents that it contained. We also ensured that individuals responsible for maintaining certain documents within the Hub had editing rights to make changes directly through the Hub.

Our staff was excited to use this resource because it was an efficient way to organize information they would usually attempt to retrieve from our printed handbook or a cluttered email inbox. One teacher emailed me soon after receiving the link to the Hub:

"Thank you and the administration team so much! I have had a file that I've called 'In case you missed this' for a couple of years, but I never had the time to organize it. What you have created is more than I had hoped to complete myself. Thanks so much for getting this put together. I feel like I just got a little present from my bosses."

Since its inception, numerous teachers have contributed suggestions and relevant content to the Hub, and it will continue to be revised based on the needs of our school.

Figure 1 below is a screenshot that illustrates a portion of the Hub that is used at Delaware Valley High School. If you are interested in creating a Hub for your school and would like to receive a template, please send an email to nkryptavich@dvsd.org

Figure 1

DVHS HUB								
DVHS	Staff Expectations	Staff Procedures	Co-Curricular Activities	Field Trips	Discipline	Instructional Expectations	Grades & Report Cards	Parents Commun.
Mission & Slogan	Code of Conduct	Attendance Records	Student Activity Funds	Field Trip Procedures	Teacher Guidelines	Guidelines for Class Changes	Grading System	Public Complai
Civil Rights Affirmation	Teacher Attendance	Class Cuts	Eligibility	Bus Accident Procedures	Dress Code	Vocational Advisory Committees	Report Cards & Student Evaluation	Publicit Release
Staff Roster	Personal Leave	Classroom Procedures	Advisor Responsibilities		Detention Rules	Curriculum Writing Guidelines	Schoology	Newslett
DVHS Counselors	Routine Responsibilities	Frontline	2021-2022 Coaches		ISS Rules	IEP Writer	PowerTeacher	Twitter
VoiceMail Directory	Classroom Teacher & Guidance	Employee Paystub Website	2021-2022 Advisors		Student Handbook		PowerTeacher - Creating Assignments	Instagra
Classroom Extensions	Public Relations		Club Advisor Checklist				PowerTeacher - Creating Categories	Transper Director (PHLOTE P

Reference

Jones, K. [@kjones_m]. (2021, June 23). *I have ditched the staff handbook and created a Hub for this year! Each cell is hyperlinked to the specified document. It's still a work in progress. #LeadLAP #BoldSchool #gcessuperheroes [Tweet].* Twitter. https://twitter.com/kjones_m/status/1407861748024037377

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Jessica Fellin	Penns Valley Area SD	Edward Ulmer	Brentwood Borough SD
Eric Frank	Glendale SD	Ryan Van Norman	Career Institute of Technology
Matthew Givler	Northwestern Lehigh SD	Nicole VanBuskirk	Norristown Area SD
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Celysmar Oquendo	Allentown City SD	Dionna Westry	Pittsburgh Clayton Academy
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Below is a link for instructions on how to record and submit a video:

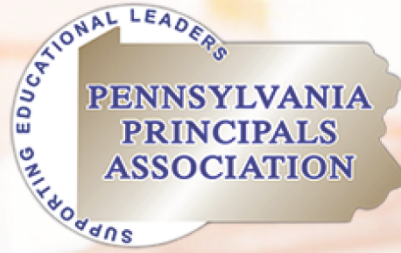
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PR Academy: Onboarding for Achievement and Growth

By Dr. Brian R. Miller and Brian Glickman



About the Authors: Brian R. Miller, Ed.D., has served as Superintendent at Pine-Richland School District in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, since 2013. In his 27th year in education, he is responsible for leading a district with six schools, 513 staff, approximately 4,600 students and an annual budget of approximately \$100M. Pine-Richland is recognized as a high-performing school district across all indicators receiving the Mid-Atlantic Alliance for Performance Excellence (MAAPE) Mastery Award in 2020 and the MAAPE Excellence Award in 2021.

Dr. Miller has served 10 years as a senior examiner with the Baldrige Performance Excellence national program with five years as a team lead. He has also participated on multiple site visit teams.

Brian Glickman is the Director of Human Resources at Pine-Richland School District since August 2020. Prior to working at Pine-Richland, he served as the director of talent management for the Pittsburgh Public Schools and worked in the human resources department.

Prior to working in human resources, Mr. Glickman spent nine years in the classroom, mainly as a lead early childhood teacher. He is a Society of Human Resources Manager senior certified professional (SHRM-SCP).

Introduction

As educational leaders, we know that pursuing the mission of any school district begins with a knowledgeable, skilled and engaged workforce. Recent reports by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) continue to reinforce the challenge of teacher shortages in the commonwealth (PDE, 2022). Recruitment has also been challenging for other positions, such as paraprofessional, custodians and principals. These challenges – by position and degree – are felt differently among the 500 public school districts in Pennsylvania.

We know that an effective human resources department must address the end-to-end process that begins with workforce capability and capacity and then moves to recruitment, selection, orientation, **onboarding**, professional development, performance management, compensation, benefits and more (much more). This article will focus on an area of operations that has seen significant change over the past 10 years at Pine-Richland School District (PRSD). We now operate a **PR Academy onboarding program** for many different position types. Each PR Academy is now differentiated by workforce segment with a focus on organizational culture and job-specific competencies. We did not start at this point...and we know that we have room to grow. In this article, we will describe the evolution of the PR Academy concept and some of the successes and “learning moments” along the way.

Background

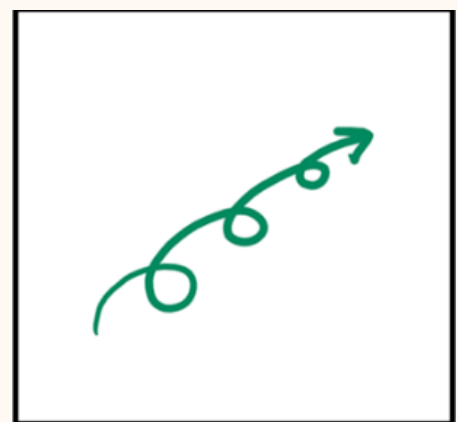
For many years, the focus of onboarding was limited to teachers who required an induction program to meet requirements for Level II permanent certification. The program was limited to those teachers who had not previously completed an induction program in a different district. Participants received some exposure to district procedures and professional development practices. Without a formal set of collegial requirements, a mentor was assigned to support each inductee. The program was one year in length and participants met compliance requirements. As a district, we understood the need to expand and improve this program. We made an intentional decision to balance redesign with other strategic priorities.

In 2014, the program was redesigned with a more systematic focus. A training was held with mentors in advance of the new hire orientation day. Program elements were reviewed with master teachers. A portfolio binder was created to verify meeting topics and to collect evidence. Several meetings were held over the course of the year to review progress and provide additional professional development. The program was still focused on only those teachers who required a formal induction program for Level II certification. Newly hired teachers with experience were not included in the program. We still did not have systematic onboarding for other workforce groups. It was still a blind spot at that time.

Organizational Maturity

As we matured in our approach to strategic planning for 2016-2019 and 2019-2023, we did so with a renewed focus on workforce development and engagement. We applied the concept of continuous improvement to many of our key processes and systems (**Figure 1**). The green “continuous improvement” loops illustrate that improvement is not usually a straight line. We had also begun implementing some concepts from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP). Per BPEP, the process acronym and evaluation factor of ADLI stands for approach, deployment, learning and integration (BPEP, 2022). Is there a

Figure 1 - Continuous Improvement



systematic (repeatable) approach? Is it deployed to relevant areas? Has it been refined through cycles of learning? Does it integrate with areas important to the organization? We used these questions to re-evaluate our onboarding program for teachers and then expand that program for other workforce groups.

First Opportunity Gap

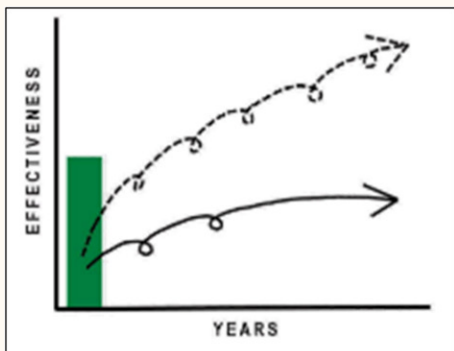
Far beyond compliance, onboarding is also about culture and relationships. We included all teachers. We expanded the mentor training. We delivered the program through quarterly meetings facilitated at the district level organized in secondary and elementary groups. We were more focused in the identification of key concepts and competencies that served as learning goals of the program. We better understood that every organization – even in the same public education sector – has a unique culture, history and language. By expanding the onboarding program for all newly hired teachers, we began to more firmly establish areas such as: mission, vision, values, strategic plan, curriculum, instruction, assessment and more.

We also realized a significant blind spot with other workforce groups. While teachers compose the largest segment of our 520+ member workforce, we realized that we did not have a similar – but differentiated – program for paraprofessionals, custodians, secretaries and administrators (PRSD, 2022). As the PR Academy for Teachers was refined through significant cycles of learning, we also created a PR Academy for Paraprofessionals, PR Academy for Custodians and PR Academy for Administrators. These other workforce groups benefited from the past learning (i.e., deficiencies) of our other onboarding program. In this way, we were able to launch programs at a much higher level of quality. These programs were designed with input from experienced staff members in each workforce group to ensure meaningful content with practical application in

the job. In a variation of our continuous improvement loops, we were focused on creating a growth mindset in all employees that started a “dotted line” trajectory of improvement over a career (Figure 2).

A person on this trajectory of taking a “step up and to the right” each year will have an even greater impact on our mission.

Figure 2 - Personal Growth



Second Opportunity Gap

Is it effective? How do we know? As we started to better assess the effectiveness of the PR Academy experience, we quickly realized that the results were not at the desired level. It was certainly a humbling “aha” moment. As educators, we immediately understood that the responsibility rested with the program design and facilitation. For each academy, we then implemented a significant design. For teachers, we focused the lesson plan as the heart of preparation. In a backwards design and “no mystery” approach, we clarified the 10 competencies that would be used to measure program effectiveness (Figure 3). For several years, we

have now shared those competencies right at the beginning of the program to make the learning goals very clear. We also share our desire for our participants to be satisfied with his or her experience. This simple and straightforward approach helps us understand

both satisfaction and learning. The same approach is used for our other workforce groups. While the competencies and meeting structure/frequency is different between groups, the overall design concept and framework is the same. We are proud to measure and report these results (Figure 4).

Figure 3 - Teacher Competencies

Competency Item	Yes	No	N/A
1. Identify the Mission, Vision, Values & General Structure/Purpose of Strategic Plan			
2. Accurately describe Model for T & L, with minimum of three circles and subequivalent			
3. Access PRSD Curriculum & Lesson recommendation / content			
4. Describe a minimum of 5 key elements of a lesson plan			
5. Submit a sample week lesson plan that meets minimum elements			
6. Accurately articulate the difference between a learning goal and learning activity, with at least one example			
7. Describe the three big ideas of assessment with one practical example			
8. Assess a set of questions to determine whether DOK 1, 2 or 3			
9. Access IEP-at-a-glance			
10. Accurately explain the purpose of PEP and demonstrate growth from baseline to side			
TOTAL			98 Possible %

Figure 4 - PR Academy Measures

Group	Year	Complete	Satis. (S/V/S)	Competency
Teachers	2019-20	100%	100%	98.18%
	2020-21	100%	100%	100%
	2021-22	96%	100%	98.75%
Para-professionals	2019-20	100%	87.5%	98.75%
	2020-21	100%	100%	98.33%
	2021-22	100%	100%	92.7%
Administrators	2019-20	100%	100%	97.14%
	2020-21	100%	100%	100%
	2021-22	100%	100%	100%

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Conclusion

School districts invest a significant amount of time in the recruitment and selection process for new hires. For too many reasons to list, it is clear that an effective onboarding program – as part of a comprehensive human resources system – is helpful for both the employee and the organization. It provides an opportunity to affirm the culture and values of the organization. It also helps ensure that new hires have the knowledge, skill and feedback to be successful. At Pine-Richland, our PR Academy approach has

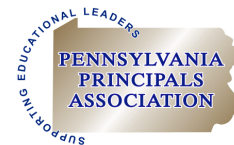
been through many cycles of refinement in the past decade. If we have learned anything, it is the need to constantly evaluate the changing needs of each position and to use the evaluation feedback of participants to keep improving. The importance of this work at either a district or building level is further highlighted by the staffing shortages experienced at present and also forecast for the future. Please contact us to discuss any of the PR Academy programs at bglickman@pinerichland.org or brmiller@pinerichland.org

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR - 2022

The PA Principals Association has developed a **Professional Development Calendar for 2022** with new professional learning offerings for members. **January through May 2023 will be released later.** There is no cost associated with these sessions, but registration is required to have access to the Zoom webinars. **See below for details and the link to register for the remaining session for 2022.**



Don't miss this great opportunity to network and share with other principals and school leaders!

DECEMBER 12, 2022 at 4:00 PM

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 - **Speaker Bio:** Dr. Michael S. Snell serves as the Assistant Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Principals Association and recently retired from Central York School District as superintendent. He is the author of the book, *Clockwork: Time-Saving Routines and Tested Strategies for Success*.
 - **Session Description:** In the second session, Michael will present “Daily Set-Up” strategies and routines to tackle your busy days. Other topics covered will include a meeting note sheet and a filing technique to help reduce paper and files laying around your office.

To register, go to: <https://www.papincipals.org/signature-services/professional-development-training-act-45-pil-programs/2022-2023-professional-development-calendar/>



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Making Space for Modern Learning

By Dr. Zeb Jansante, Mandi S. Figlioli and Brett Slezak



About the Authors: **Dr. Zeb Jansante** is the Assistant Superintendent for the Bethel Park School District since the summer of 2020. Prior to that, he served as the principal at Bethel Park High School for 14 years. His administrative career spans three decades, and in 2014, he was named the PA Principal of Year by the PA Principals Association.

Dr. Jansante served on the PA Principals Association Board of Directors for over 25 years. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Point Park University's School of Education.

Mandi S. Figlioli joined the Bethel Park School District as the Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction for K-12 STEAM in 2021. She enjoyed 10 years as an elementary educator before pursuing a career in administration. She also served as the Assistant to the Superintendent of the Burgettstown Area School District for seven years and is a children's book author.

Brett Slezak serves as the Director of Technology at Bethel Park School District. After spending 10 years teaching health and physical education, he made the transition into administration. In 2020, Mr. Slezak was awarded the PETE & C Technology Administrator of the Year for Pennsylvania. While teaching, he was the 2017 recipient of a Carnegie Science Award for Middle Level Educator of the Year.

Public education, by and large, is long overdue for a “facelift” in modern learning spaces. Bethel Park School District is no different than most. Navigating the uncharted waters of a pandemic, in addition to a fourth Industrial Revolution, has necessitated an urgency to alter traditional school building designs. We believe that these modern learning spaces must support a universal design for learning and be conducive to exploring the skills and dispositions necessary for the future workforce to which our students will be contributing. At Bethel Park School District, we are currently renovating our two-time, Blue Ribbon of Excellence middle school that has not seen a full renovation for 30 years. We are also in the process of consolidating all five of our neighborhood elementary buildings under one roof into a new K-5 elementary center. Both projects cost several million dollars, however, the informational concepts of this article can be applied to any single classroom, partial or full renovation or a full build at your district within your respective budget.

Before moving any walls or breaking ground, it is important to conceptualize; space design sets the tone for the type of learning experiences that will occur in a classroom. The physical environment will not only impact academic success, but also a student's social well-being. Whether you are constructing a new school, renovating an existing building or re-designing a classroom, we would like to offer the **ABC framework** as a lens for creating a space for modern learning created by the Bethel Park School District team.

“A”gency

Generally speaking, agency is defined as the sense of control you have over your circumstances, as well as your capacity to influence your own behavior and manage various tasks and situations. Educationally speaking, *student agency* speaks to a student's capacity to shape their learning by setting personalized goals, reflecting on them and taking responsible action to achieve them. “Regardless of whether a problem is obvious or hidden, the impetus to engage with it starts with a sense of agency – a sense that it's possible to reshape the way things are by directing one's actions purposefully” (Clapp & Tishman, 2017). In order for students to feel a sense of agency, the learning environment must host experiences that are meaningful and relevant to them. It is imperative that these experiences be driven by their interests, reflective of their voice and achieved through authentic choice.

We also believe when designing learning spaces conducive to student agency, we must acknowledge that a teacher is the designer of learning experiences, not just a means for dispensing content. The physical spaces should reflect this. As educational designers, we should avoid making the teacher desk or podium the central feature of the room. Rather, it should be a place where students can visit to ask questions and receive feedback. It is also important to plan for the furniture to be easily rearranged to accommodate various student groupings. The space should flex to the work, not the work to the space. In addition, a variety of media and materials should be plentiful and accessible. Students develop agency when they are both fluent with these tools and use them in a way that showcases their learning through their unique voice. For this reason, it is equally important for spaces large and

“**In order for students to feel a sense of agency, the learning environment must host experiences that are meaningful and relevant to them.**”

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small to have places where students can publicly display their work or present their findings. When spaces are designed with these ideas, students truly can have agency over their learning.

“B”elonging

“Developmental psychology describes adolescence as a time in which the key learning and growth opportunities occur in the context of group identity, alienation, fidelity, peer pressure and experimenting with new roles. In other words, asking oneself again and again, “Who am I? And do people like me?” (“Fitting In,” 2022). Modern learning spaces are designed with inclusivity, equity and variability in mind. Metaphorically speaking, students need access to windows and mirrors; the space should not only foster a sense of personal belonging, but also an opportunity to explore the perspectives and identities of the entire community of learners that share the space. As we work toward mastery of grade-level standards, we must also promote the development of the student’s individual learning profiles and preferences. For students to thrive in the space, there must be opportunities and areas for self-regulation, and perhaps even de-escalation. One of the best ways for students to feel like they belong in the space is to truly engage them as co-designers in the process. While this looks different across age levels, students seeing their input come to fruition in a space sends the message that they are valued and belong there.

“C”ollaboration

Sabrina Gates (2018) asserts that while educators often work alone in the classroom, they do not – and should not – operate independently. Throughout our careers, we’ve always found that the best way to improve learning experiences and environments is to work together. With this thinking, we believe knowing how co-designing sows the seeds of belonging in a space, collaboration is not only an essential part of the design process but also an intended consequence. With collaborative learning experiences as the thoughtful goal, it is important to be intentional about the type of learning that will occur in the space. This includes not only thinking about furniture, but also planning for what materials, supports and technology that will be utilized. A modern learning space should offer flexibility to seamlessly transition between multiple modes of instruction, such as whole group, small group, partner or independent learning.



DRAW Collective Architects’ design of a Western Pennsylvania elementary maker space for Fox Chapel School District.

And while designing for collaboration is paramount, we would be remiss to not address the other three “C’s” of modern learning. It is equally essential that learning spaces offer opportunities for communication, creativity and critical thinking. Workspaces neatly assembled for the convenience of attendance and recording no longer mimic the diverse and rich environments of the workplaces that our student’s will experience after graduation. If we expect our students to work in a collaborative community, we can’t design our learning spaces to be social islands.

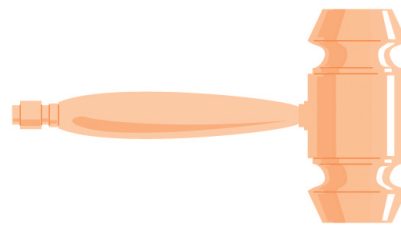
As we work to incorporate the ABC’s of modern space design, we must be cautious to not make assumptions, or resort to unilateral decision making and outdated trends. Space design and instructional planning should be fluid, flexible and responsive to the learners it serves. These transformations can occur on a large or small scale, and do not have to be costly. Flipping the classroom culture to foster agency, belonging and collaboration can be as transformational as new furniture or the latest and greatest technology. If we approach our learning spaces as blank canvases, the possibilities for co-creation are endless. We cannot delay the rapid speed at which education evolves, but we can embrace the journey as our masterpiece.

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Legal Corner



By Michael I. Levin, Esq., PA Principals Association General Counsel

Due Process in Relationship to Furloughs and Demotions



The question was recently posed as to whether and to what extent a school district may demote or terminate a school administrator due to “economic” reasons or “restructuring” without due process? The short answer is that in most instances, where school administrators are deemed “professional employees” under the School Code, demotions and terminations due to “economic” reasons or “re-

structuring” are subject to due process.

Initially, however, it is appropriate to describe what is meant by “due process.” Simply stated, due process contemplates notice and a hearing opportunity. Related to furloughs and demotions, that means that the school district must provide notice of the furlough or demotion and allow the employee to invoke a hearing process that complies with applicable law, such as the Local Agency Law, 2 Pa.C.S.A. §751 *et seq.*, the School Code 24 P.S., Article XI and/or constitutional concepts of due process.

As all school administrators are intimately aware, school districts are often faced with the prospect of furloughing or demoting professional staff, including professional administrators. As professional employees, however, school principals are subject to the protections conferred upon professional employees under the School Code and Local Agency Law.

As most of you know, furloughs (or “suspensions” as used by the legislature) are governed by Sections 1124 and 1125.1 of the School Code, 24 P.S. §§11-1124, 11-1125.1. Section 1124 outlines the permissible reasons for furloughs and Section 1125.1 identifies the professional employees to be furloughed and the procedures to be followed in furloughing (and reinstating) professional employees.

For years, the primary reason most often cited for furloughs was

declining student enrollment. However, in the past decade or so, school districts increasingly began furloughing professional employees, including administrators, due to the curtailment or alteration of educational programs. Under Section 1124, with limited exception, school districts could not furlough professional employees for any other reason, chief among them, economic reasons. However, in reality, most furloughs undertaken, especially under the curtailment or alteration of programs premise, were often prompted by economic reasons which begot the “operational” or “educational” changes declared by the school districts.

In 2017 and 2018, with the passage of Act 55 and Act 39, respectively, the legislature amended Sections 1124 and 1125.1 of the School Code to permit school districts to furlough professional staff for “reasons of economy” and effectively eliminate seniority as the primary method for choosing the applicable professional employee(s) to furlough, and greatly reducing bumping rights.

When the only grounds for a furlough of professional employees is economic under section 1124(a)(5) of the School Code, 24 P.S. §11-1124(a)(5), there are several procedural requirements that must be met, but that are not required when a furlough is based on a substantial decline in enrollment or a curtailment or alteration of the program. Economic furloughs require a school district to obtain board approval of economic furloughs at a public meeting and not later than 60 days prior to the date of adoption of the final budget, that the school board adopt a “resolution of intent” to furlough the pro-

fessional employees in the following fiscal year.

As noted, Act 55 also modified Section 1125.1. As I explained in a previous article at that time: For years, under Section 1125.1, the selection of professional employees to be furloughed was required to be based solely upon seniority and subject to realignment of staff to ensure that the least senior employees were furloughed, i.e., by bumping, “straight line” realignment and/or “checkerboarding.” Under that scenario, once the number of employees to furlough and the



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areas in which the furloughs will take place was determined, the school entity would then have to determine which employees to suspend. Until the passage of Act 55, the law was clear that the least senior employees were to be the ones furloughed. Therefore, in order to ensure that the least senior employees were furloughed, employees slated for furlough were entitled to “bump” less senior employees. For example, if the school entity decided to eliminate one of two assistant principal positions in the high school, the least senior assistant principal in the school district would be identified for furlough and the other assistant principals would be assigned to the available assistant principal slots. The least senior assistant principal would then have the ability to bump less senior employees in positions for which he or she was certified, as long as the position was equal to or higher than the position of the assistant principal position. Thus, the certifications held by the assistant principal on the effective date of the suspension would determine the positions for which the employee would be able to bump. Unless school board policy or an applicable agreement provided otherwise, only “straight-line” bumping was required, not “checkerboard” bumping or realignment.

Under Act 55, the legislature did away with that entire scheme. Thus, under Section 1125.1, the selection of tenured employees for furlough was based first upon performance evaluation ratings, with seniority maintained and to be used as a “tie breaker” only within groupings of like-rated employees in the positions in which the employees are currently teaching.

However, given the fact that most professional employees (over 75%) are rated satisfactory (proficient), in reality, in most instances, seniority still will have been the predominate criteria upon which employees were selected for furlough. The actual *significant* change in the legislation was that the comparison of seniority was limited to the similarly rated employees within the area of certification required by law for the professional employee’s current position. The legislature made this clear by the use of the following language:

Professional employes shall be suspended under section 1124 in the following order, within the area of certification required by law for the professional employe’s current position:

...

(a.1) When more professional employes receive the same overall performance

rating than there are suspensions, seniority within the school **entity and within the area of certification required by law for the professional employe’s current position** shall be used to determine suspensions among professional employes with the same overall performance rating...

24 P.S. § 11-1125.1 (Emphasis added)

As noted, in 2018, the legislature enacted Act 39, which among other things, reinstated the realignment (bumping) provisions of Section 1125.1 which were eliminated under Act 55. However, as written, realignment is subject to the order prescribed in 1125.1(a), which first requires consideration of the educators’ recent evaluations and further requires that when two or more educators are in the same evaluation category, the least senior employee(s) will be “bumped” so more senior employee(s) are retained. Although the above-referenced provisions of Sections 1124 and 1125.1 arguably make it easier to furlough school administrators, given that most school principals will continue to receive satisfactory evaluation ratings, most instances of furlough among school principals have, and will continue to be, based upon relative seniority.

In addition to furloughs, both Sections 1124 and 1125.1 tacitly apply to demotions undertaken for the reasons articulated in Section 1124, primarily as to selection and reinstatement. There has always been some confusion about demotions and how demotions fit into the downsizing of administrative staff. In light of the recent changes in the rules noted above and given the less than perfect evaluation processes, such confusion will probably continue. However, with some exception, the rules are simple and straight forward. To that end, where a demotion is part of an overall reorganization or based upon reasons stated under Section 1124, the bumping and reinstatement requirements of Section 1125.1 may come into play. On the other hand, where there is a “pure” demotion (i.e., not for any of the reasons stated in Section 1124), any bumping and reinstatement rules do not apply.

Further, unlike demotions undertaken for reasons stated in Section 1124, “pure” demotions may occur for any rationale that is not arbitrary or capricious. That includes economic reasons or disciplinary reasons. Simply stated, if performance issues suggest that there is not a good fit for a principal to be the principal of a school, he or she can be demoted to an assistant principal position, a teaching position or any other position for which he or she is properly certificated. Bumping does not apply.

“Until the passage of Act 55, the law was clear that the least senior employees were to be the ones furloughed.”

In terms of process, Section 1125.1 expressly states that a decision to furlough shall be considered an adjudication within the meaning of the Local Agency Law. Pursuant to the Local Agency Law, a furloughed professional employee must be provided with reasonable notice of the furlough and the right to request a hearing before the school board to protest either the grounds upon which the furlough is based or as to the particular employee's selection. A furloughed professional employee may appeal the school board's hearing decision to the court of common pleas of the county in which the school district is located, and then to the Commonwealth Court.

In terms of demotions, as stated above, as a matter of law, "pure demotions" of professional employees are subject to School Code Section 1151 (24 P.S. §11-1151). Under Section 1151, such demotions may occur where the school district has any rationale that is not "arbitrary or capricious" including economic or disciplinary reasons. Courts have long held that any rational reason is sufficient to support a demotion and that a demotion will be overturned only if it is shown to be arbitrary and capricious. As such, demotions are presumptively valid.

Procedurally, Section 1151 states that no demotion in salary or in type of position can occur without the consent of the employee, or subject to the right to a hearing before the board of school directors and an appeal in the same manner as provided in the case of the dismissal of a professional employee. (An appeal to the Secretary of Education and to the Commonwealth Court.)

When it is clear that a demotion is being imposed, due process and sections 1127 and 1151 of the School Code, 24 P.S. §§11-1127, 11-1151, require notice of the proposed action in the form of a statement of charges. If the administrator requests a hearing, a school board hearing will be held in accordance with applicable law, including section 1126 of the School Code, 24 P.S. §11-1126. However, it is not always clear whether a transfer constitutes a demotion. In that situation, the employee can initiate the due process procedures by asserting that the transfer is a demotion, and the school district will be required to implement that hearing processes required by the School Code.

Of course, not all administrative positions are "certificated" and so, not all school administrators are "professional employees" as is defined under the School Code, Pennsylvania regulations and Pennsylvania case law.¹ In fact, for many administrative positions, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) does not require the administrator hold any certification issued by PDE, nor are they referenced in the PDE regulations (Chapter 22) or PDE's guidelines² as requiring certification. Many administrative positions do not encompass what would be described as "professional duties" defined by the PDE regulations as "[a] duty the performance of which is restricted to professional personnel by the scope of their certificate." 22 Pa. Code §49.1. Certain administrators are employed with the recognition that they are not professional employees and will not attain tenure status.



In instances where school administrators are not deemed professional employees under the School Code, there are no School Code requirements or applicable procedures related to the elimination of non-professional positions or the resulting furlough and/or demotion of non-professional employees similar to those expressly found for professional employees. Thus, where an administrator is not a professional employee, he/she has no property right in his/her employment and further, under section 514 of the School Code,³ when a nonprofessional employee's job is eliminated for reasons of economy, there is no right to a hearing. Citing *Genco v. Bristol Borough School Dist.*, 55 Pa. Comwlth. 78, 80-81, 423 A.2d 36, 37-38 (1980); *Sergi v. School Dist. of City of Pittsburgh*, 28 Pa. Comwlth. 576, 580-582, 368 A.2d 1359, 1361-1362 (1977). Moreover, Section 514 has been read by the courts to the effect that "removal" has been interpreted to mean only discharge (termination). Hence, the finding that Section 514 does not refer to, or cover, reassignments, even those that result in demotions.⁴ Noteworthy, a recent Commonwealth Court decision issued in March of this year held that the similar language found in School Code Section 1089 applicable to business managers is likewise inapplicable to reassignments resulting in demotion and thus precludes hearing rights under that statute as well.

Based upon the foregoing, school administrators who are deemed professional employees under the School Code, facing impending furloughs or demotions based upon "restructuring" and/or "economic" reasons, certainly enjoy due process rights as enumerated in the School Code. However, although those processes provide a procedural basis for such challenges, given the minimal standards established by the legislature and the courts – especially in terms of demotions – in reality they provide only a limited substantive basis for successfully challenging furloughs and/or demotions.

End Notes

¹ Under the School Code, two essential criteria establish “professional employee” status: employment classification and certification. An individual must occupy a position for which Pennsylvania Department of Education (“PDE”) requires certification issued by PDE (*Duerr v. Mars Area School Dist.*, TTA 1-86, 23 SLIE 87 (1986), and the individual must be properly certificated to fill that position (*Gorman v. East Allegheny School District*, TTA 4-96, 34 SLIE 52 (1997)). To be considered a “professional employee,” an individual must meet both conditions. Said another way, “professional” positions are ones for which the holder is required to possess an applicable certificate issued by PDE. By statute, possession of a certificate is fundamental to classification as a professional employee. *Occhipinti v. Board of School Directors of Old Forge School District*, 76 Pa. Cmwlth. 516, 464 A.2d 631, 632 (1983).

² The regulations at 22 Pa. Code §49.13 authorize PDE to issue administrative agency interpretive policies and directives relating to professional certification and staffing in the schools as may be necessary to carry out the intent of the regulations. PDE issues written policy and guideline statements, known as “Professional Personnel Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines” (commonly referred to as “CSPGs”) to clarify PDE’s position and give advice on certification and staffing issues. The CSPGs are found on the PDE website. (<https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/Staffing%20Guidelines/Pages/default.aspx>) There are more than 100 CSPGs, addressing the numerous appropriate certifications required for Pennsylvania schools. In addition, PDE website lists the numerous types and codes applicable to the certificates issued by PDE.

³ Section 514, in relevant part, states:

Removal of Officers, Employees, etc.— The board of school directors in any school district, except as herein otherwise provided, shall after due notice, giving the reasons therefor, and after hearing if demanded, have the right at any time to remove any of its officers, employees, or appointees for incompetency, intemperance, neglect of duty, violation of any of the school laws of this Commonwealth, or other improper conduct...

24 P.S. §5-514.

⁴ See *Organtini v. Methacton School District* 2008 WL 324022 (U.S.D.C E.D. Pa.) (“From the plain language of Section 514, it is clear that a hearing is not available in cases of transfer or demotion; the hearing right is triggered only by removal.”) *Id.*⁴, citing *Moriarta v. State College Area School District*, 144 Pa. Cmwlth. 359, 601 A.2d 872,873 (Pa. Cmwlth. 1992) (“[t]he word ‘removal’ means discharge or dismissal...”) and *Miller v. Quakertown Community School District*, 18 Pa. D. & C. 3d 416, 419-420 (Bucks County CCP 1981) (Section 514 “refers to the removal (dismissal) of a nonprofessional employee and not to the demotion of such an employee”). Additionally, the *Organtini* Court expressly held that “Pennsylvania’s Local Agency Law does not provide the statutory basis for requiring a hearing upon demotion of a classified government employee.” *Id.*, at *6.

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The Pennsylvania Principals Association is seeking articles for its **Winter 2023 edition of *The Pennsylvania Administrator* magazine**. *This issue does not have a theme, so any education-related articles will be considered for publication by the Editorial Review Board.*



Submissions that are sent to us as scholarly papers (dissertations) will be returned for a rewrite before being reviewed by the Editorial Review Board. In addition, articles that are determined to require extensive editing, or are not in APA style, will also be returned for revisions before being considered for publication. For additional article criteria and specifications, visit: www.paprincipals.org/publications/the-pennsylvania-administrator/how-to-submit-an-article/

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