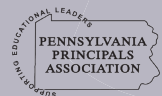


# THE PENNSYLVANIA Administrator

**PA SUMMIT26 –  
REGISTRATION OPENS  
IN APRIL!**  
*BE READY TO SECURE YOUR SPOT  
AT THIS YEAR'S PREMIER EVENT.*  
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**LEGAL CORNER – PRINCIPAL  
INVESTIGATIONS (PART II)**  
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Magazine of the Pennsylvania  
Principals Association

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



The school year is more than halfway done, and spring is quickly approaching — a season of renewal and growth. Of course, for school leaders, it also means exams, spring athletics, extracurricular events and end-of-year celebrations. Still, this is a great time to pause and think about your own personal and professional growth.

Are you looking to expand your network or focus on meaningful professional development? If so, the Pennsylvania Principals Association is here for you. We're committed to advocating on your behalf, offering legal and Act 93 guidance and support and creating high-quality professional development opportunities designed with school leaders in mind. (See page 11 for information regarding the *Leader of Leaders Collaborative, third cohort*.)



One event you won't want to miss: We're gearing up for **SUMMIT26 for PA Educational Leaders, August 2-4, 2026, at the Renaissance Allentown Hotel and Parkland High School in Allentown, Pennsylvania**. We're thrilled to be co-hosting again with PA EDGE. Act 45 hours will be available, and administrative teams are strongly encouraged to attend. (Check out page 8 for details.)

In the meantime, take some time to explore the practical, timely articles in this issue. And if you'd like to submit an article for the spring/summer edition, the deadline is April 24, 2026. ■

Not a member of the PA Principals Association? **JOIN NOW!**



### Dates to Remember...

#### MAY/JUNE 2026

5/31-6/2

SCHOOL COLLABORATIVE SYMPOSIUM  
Renaissance Pittsburgh Hotel  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

#### JULY 2026

14-16

LEADER OF LEADERS COLLABORATIVE  
THIRD COHORT - KICKOFF - LOCATION TBD

#### AUGUST 2026

2-4

SUMMIT26 for PA EDUCATIONAL LEADERS  
Renaissance Allentown Hotel &  
Parkland High School  
Allentown, Pennsylvania

### Letter to the Editor

To submit a *Letter to the Editor* for an upcoming edition of *The Pennsylvania Administrator*, please send it to Sheri Thompson, Editor, at [sherit@papprincipals.org](mailto:sherit@papprincipals.org).

*The deadline for the Spring/Summer issue is April 24, 2026.*

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### YOUR CHANCE TO BE PUBLISHED!

*Submit an Article for The Pennsylvania Administrator Spring/Summer 2026 Edition*

Articles for *The Pennsylvania Administrator* magazine's **Spring/Summer 2026 edition** are being accepted by the Pennsylvania Principals Association.

To submit an article, please send it to [sherit@papprincipals.org](mailto:sherit@papprincipals.org) by **April 24, 2026**.

For article specifications, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2kr8td3v>.

# THE PENNSYLVANIA Administrator

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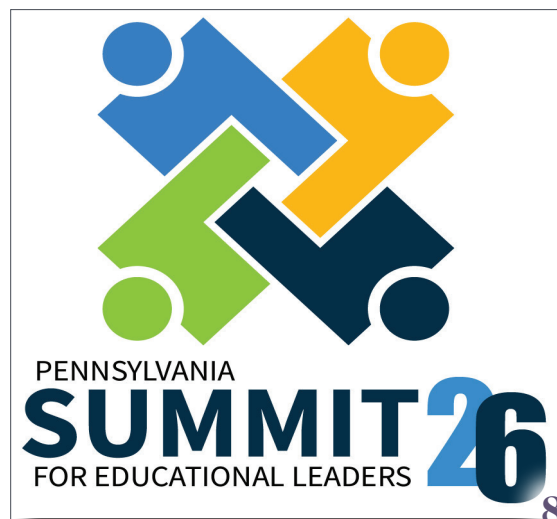
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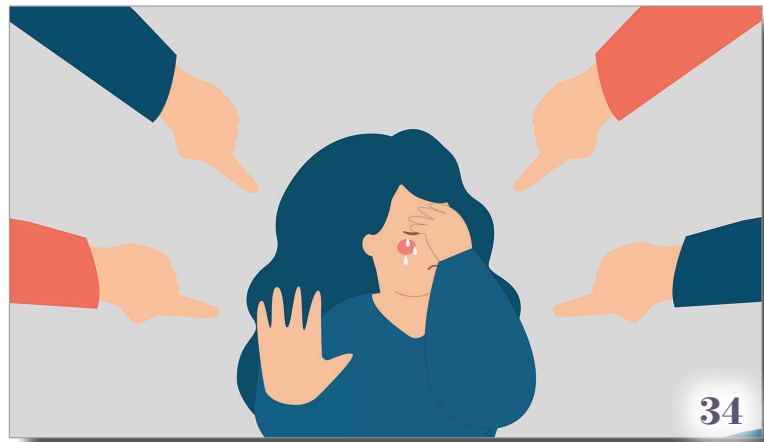
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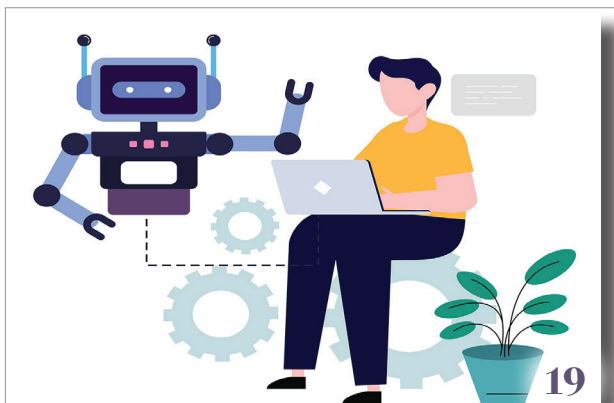




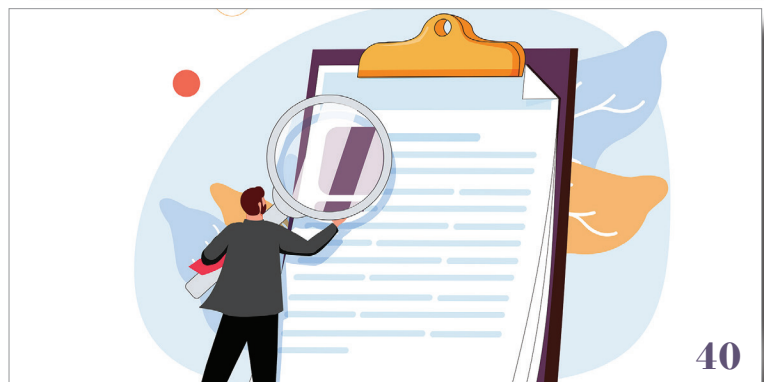
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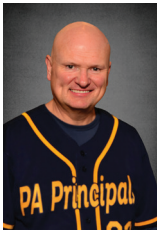
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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTEPAD

# WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

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



If you watched the Super Bowl this past year, you may have felt an overwhelming sense of boredom in the first three quarters. There were no touchdowns by either team. We, as viewers, love the big plays, phenomenal catches and long runs. But the old adage is that “defense wins championships,”

and that was on full display in the “Big Game” this year. Neither team’s offense was able to score a touchdown until the final quarter thanks to tough defenses on both sides of the ball. That was, however, not the case for the entire season as both Seattle and New England averaged over 28 points (four touchdowns and extra points) per game. One could say that the offensive performance of both teams got them to the Super Bowl, but the defensive performance in the “Big Game” was the real story. And then there is the *Special Teams*, or as some know them as, the *Kicking Team*. Seattle’s place kicker kicked five field goals and two extra points, totaling 17 points in the game. He scored 206 points this season, making him the first NFL player to eclipse 200 points in a season.

As you can tell, I am a football fan, even though I have never played the game. In all honesty, there are many parts of the game, especially the play calling, strategy and formations, that I do not understand. What I do understand is that it takes all parts of a team, working together, to claim victory. Any part of the team can have a bad game, but no part of the team can have a bad season.

The same holds true with school district leadership. It takes all parts of the leadership team to ensure the success of the students we are called to serve. Every part of that team has its specialties and uniquenesses, but no part of the team is more or less important. The elementary school leadership is no less important than the high school leadership. A strong middle school leadership team cannot make up for a weak elementary team that did not ensure the students were prepared for the next level. All parts of the district leadership team must work together, support each other, collaborate, motivate and hold each other accountable.

When I was an elementary principal preparing to implement the first full-day kindergarten program in our county, it was the high school principal who was my greatest cheerleader and supporter. He saw the benefits of early childhood education and the impact it could have on his high school in the future. A few years later, when that same high school principal was beginning a one-to-one laptop program for all students, the elementary and middle school principals rallied around his efforts. We attended professional development sessions together, shared concerns, issued caution and

revamped our budgets to ensure this new program would be successful. It, of course, was hugely successful.

The Pennsylvania Principals Association will venture into a new era this summer as we move to replicate in a national arena what we have in Pennsylvania. PA Principals is a single, unified PK–12 association. That is, we work together as a team. That structure is part of what makes Pennsylvania strong — principals at every grade span share one professional community, one mission and one statewide voice. The PA Principals Association is one of many unified associations across the country: principals across every grade span — elementary, middle, high school, alternative and beyond — are part of one connected professional community working together.

At the national level, however, school leader support has historically been divided between two separate organizations, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). While both have made important contributions, this structure has created challenges for states like ours that operate as a unified PK–12 system. We join several state principal associations that have expressed interest in a national organization that mirrors how we work here in Pennsylvania — one unified national voice representing school leaders across the entire PK–12 continuum.

To meet that need, NASSP’s Board of Directors recently voted to transition into a new **PK–12 National Principals Association (NPA)** — a national organization designed to serve and advocate for principals at every grade level. This creates an opportunity for a clearer, more cohesive national structure — one that naturally aligns with the PK–12 model the PA Principals Association has had for more than two decades.

After thorough discussion, the Board of Directors of the PA Principals Association voted to disaffiliate from both existing national associations as of June 30, 2026, and reaffiliate with NASSP once they complete their transition to the new PK–12 National Principals Association. **This would begin on July 1, 2026.**

This decision was not made from a lack of respect for elementary leaders. My own background is at the elementary level, and I will fight vigorously to ensure the elementary principal’s voice is heard. The decision was made, instead, because **we are better together**. The rapidly evolving national education landscape requires us to be collaborative with our efforts. This is not a time to be divided; it is a time to stand together. Working as a **National Principals Association** is what we believe will ensure stability, respect and collaboration both now and in the future. ■

# Interim Principal Program

Day to Day or Long Term  
Substitute Administrators

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Experienced principals
- Short or long term needs
- Retired administrators
- Billed by Association;  
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**FROM THE STATE OFFICE**

# Growing Into the Dream: A New Chapter with PA Principals

*By Dr. Beth Haldeman, Director of Professional Development, PA Principals Association*



Have you ever heard yourself say, “When I grow up, I want to be ...?” For me, that statement was usually followed by, “I want to work for the PA Principals Association.” I’m incredibly grateful and excited to share that as of July 1, 2025, I have the honor of serving as the **new Director of Professional Development**.

If my name sounds familiar to you, it could be because you and I interacted when I was the President of the Association, or because I wrote or co-presented many of the PIL/Act 45 courses, or perhaps because I was the coordinator of many of the Association’s Act 45 courses. It is an honor to continue to work with many of you in this new capacity.

Personally, most of my adult life has been spent in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. I am the mom of three girls, one of whom will make me a “Nana” for the first time this spring. This will be followed by the wedding of my second daughter in the summer and the year after, my youngest daughter’s high school graduation. Needless to say, 2026-2027 will be a busy year for our family!

What excites me most about this new chapter is the opportunity to pour into leaders across the state in a more focused and intentional way. Professional development is not simply about earning hours toward Act 45 requirements — it is about growth, reflection, collaboration and continuous improvement. My goal is to ensure that every offering through the PA Principals Association feels purposeful, relevant and worth your valuable time.

Already in my wheelhouse of professional learning is running our virtual book studies, serving as an induction facilitator, co-presenting our on-site Act 45 courses and being of service to our members. In addition, I will continue to coordinate virtual *Power Hours* and regional meetings around

topics that are relevant to our members and assist with our annual Summit with highly engaging and inspiring sessions.

I continue to be the main contact for your completion of Act 45 courses but one of my immediate tasks is to expand our professional development offerings for all of our member groups. More information about each of these can be found on our website at [www.paprincipals.org](http://www.paprincipals.org) (*click on Professional Development*).

First, we are offering a Symposium for Assistant Principals and Deans of Students. This event will be held in five locations across the state at the end of March and early April. As leaders, we know that assistant principals and deans often serve in roles that are both demanding and isolating. This conference is designed not only to provide practical strategies and leadership tools, but also to create space for connection and encouragement.



Dr. Beth Haldeman presents the EdCamp Act 45 pre-conference session at Summit25 in State College.

Second, we are holding FREE, one-hour Aspiring Principals networking sessions across the state. As a member, you will see significant growth in this area, as we have determined this is one of our focus areas for the Association for the next few years. The first sessions will be offered following the Assistant Principal & Dean of Students Symposiums from 4-5 p.m.

Finally, because we are expanding our staff at the Association, we are more than available to come to your district and work with your teams. Popular events have been administrative retreats, in-service days and summer workshops. We have a cadre of workshops approved for Act 45 and can tailor the content to your district. As a benefit, the length of each session can be adjusted based on district needs, ranging anywhere from a full day of six hours to a topic-based session for two hours. An increasingly popular option is inviting us to work with your team through a series of professional learning sessions, giving us the opportunity to model the research-based qualities of effective professional development: learning that is relevant, sustainable, ongoing and practical.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to continue serving you and other Pennsylvania

leaders in this new capacity. The work of school leadership is complex, demanding and deeply meaningful. I am honored to walk alongside you as we continue building schools where educators thrive and students flourish and look forward to connecting with you — at conferences, in your districts or through our virtual sessions.

If you would like to reach me, my email is [haldeman@papprincipals.org](mailto:haldeman@papprincipals.org) and my phone number is (717) 732-4999. ■

**Scan the QR Code for the Assistant Principal & Dean of Students Symposium Flyer:**



**Scan the QR Code for the Aspiring Principals Networking event flyer:**



## Interested in an Interim Principal Position?

From time to time, we receive requests for interim principals from school districts across Pennsylvania. If you are retired, retiring or otherwise available, you may want to consider serving as an **Interim Principal**.

If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please use the link below to complete the brief form, and we will be in touch with you if there is an appropriate placement. Please complete this form (type into browser): <https://forms.office.com/r/wCjcVqiBmd>.

Vangie Unti at [unti@papprincipals.org](mailto:unti@papprincipals.org) with any questions.

## SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS!

*Were you recognized at your school or district, received an award or honor, earned an advanced degree or certification, got married, added to your family?*

We want to highlight YOU and share your GOOD NEWS with your fellow education leaders across Pennsylvania in our *Weekly Digest*! Please send the following information to Sheri Thompson at [sherit@papprincipals.org](mailto:sherit@papprincipals.org): full name, school, school district and phone number, as well as a brief explanation of your good news (2-3 brief sentences) and a high-resolution photo of yourself or depicting your good news.



PENNSYLVANIA  
**SUMMIT26**  
FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

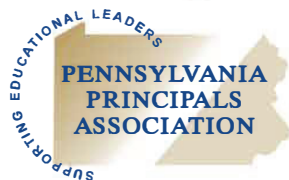
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**Allentown, PA**

Ready to elevate your impact? Join Pennsylvania's top educational leaders at Summit26 this August to recharge your vision and lead your school into the future.

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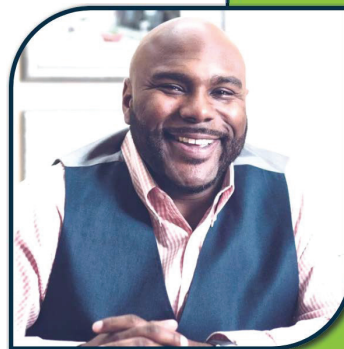
*"Never Let Go of  
Your Dreams"*



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*"Kindness  
Isn't Cringe"*



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Horsham High School  
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*"The Conductor's  
Role: Orchestrating  
Communities That  
Nurture Every Child"*



# IT MADE ME A BETTER LEADER

## THE BENEFIT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*This is a column for members by members who have participated in Professional Development offerings provided by the PA Principals Association. The Professional Development opportunities afforded to members are invaluable and make a difference!*

### Ready for an authentic, deep leadership opportunity? Join Leader of Leaders 2026-2027!

Scan the QR codes on the right to **view two short videos** featuring school leaders from the **2025-2026 Leader of Leaders Collaborative** cohort.

Hear firsthand how the **Leader of Leaders Collaborative** has shaped their leadership, strengthened their practice and why they believe other experienced principals should take part. Their stories illustrate the impact of the **Leader of Leaders Collaborative** and the value of connecting with peers who challenge and inspire them to lead at their highest level.



## Profound PD: How the Leader of Leaders Collaborative Immerses, Connects and Inspires

*By Heath Curran, Assistant Principal at Franklin Regional Senior High School, Franklin Regional School District*



My former professor, also a retired principal, had a simple motto: “Good professional development follows the same laws as good teaching.” Similar to the classroom, educator professional development had looked somewhat different since the COVID-19 pandemic. It was refreshing when an

opportunity arose that both returned to best practices and sought to innovate. I was blessed to engage deeply in “good teaching” through the Pennsylvania Principals Association’s Leader of Leaders Collaborative.

Immersed in the world of Marriott International Headquarters, the United States Naval Academy and the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, we had the opportunity to clarify our beliefs, define what it meant to be a learning organization and think deeply about how to lead with vision, courage and faith.

The on-location experiences alone were impactful, but the opportunity to engage in what our district called the “5 C’s” (collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication and citizenship) made the learning unforgettable. The Leader of Leaders experience was made whole by two essential components: (1) community and (2) the Schlechty sessions. I was in awe and humbled by the people I had the privilege to learn from during this journey. Whether over dinner or

in our Schlechty discussions, I felt both challenged and a strong sense of camaraderie. The Schlechty sessions encouraged us to think deeply — not only in terms of our own contexts, but also through analogy, parallel and metaphor. Dr. Snell, Dr. Eshbach, Dr. Haldeman and Dr. Rowland of the Schlechty Center put time and attention into every detail of the experience. Those in our district who had attended consistently said that it had been one of the most impactful professional development experiences of their careers.

When we returned to our home district, we returned inspired and prepared to act, and we did so immediately following each experience.

Upon leaving each session, I realized that the challenges we encountered as leaders were complex and required faith, courage and vision. I also realized that none of us was alone on this journey. I cannot emphasize enough how inspirational it has been to spend time with excellent leaders across the commonwealth. We must continue cultivating schools as learning organizations. I am grateful for the work the Pennsylvania Principals Association is doing to support that work in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Curran can be reached at [hcurran@franklinregional.k12.pa.us](mailto:hcurran@franklinregional.k12.pa.us). ■

# Leader of Leaders Collaborative: A Recipe for Success

By Matt Miller, Ed.D., Principal at Roundtown Elementary School, Central York School District



In the case of success-driven schools, everything rises and falls on leadership. When non-education friends and family ask me what leading a school is like, I often provide the analogy of following a recipe. There are key main ingredients to successful leadership, such as positive relationships, strong communication, organizational skills and demonstrating compassion, among others, of course. As with any great cook — or in this case, leader — successful leadership also hinges upon the leader’s understanding of how to “spice up” the recipe. Adding a pinch of systems thinking or a dash of a framework for understanding keeps the recipe fresh and inspiring.

As a longtime principal of nearly 20 years, I am beyond thankful for the Leader of Leaders Collaborative, sponsored by our PA Principals Association. This unique learning journey has afforded me the opportunity to spice up my leadership recipe by collaborating with fellow principals from across the commonwealth to experience, digest and reflect upon leadership ideals and values from non-educational businesses and industries.

As school leaders, we often forget that there is much we can learn and directly apply from corporations and industries that have absolutely no affiliation with schools. Continuing the recipe analogy, I equate this to learning about a new spice or ingredient to add. The Leader of Leaders Collaborative is a yearlong commitment that invites principals away from their schools on three separate occasions for two to three

days per experience. By immersing ourselves in a completely different culture of leadership, we allow ourselves to reimagine and make new connections to existing systems and ways of maintaining a school. My cohort of principals has already experienced extraordinary opportunities at Marriott Headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, and the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

An unintended positive consequence of this experience has been the relationships forged with other school leaders. Our facilitators have successfully built a group that listens, respects and ultimately enjoys spending time with one another. Whether working through leadership materials, participating in site visits, or going to dinner together, our crew genuinely enjoys the camaraderie of fellow school leaders, which allows us to shed the sense of isolation that can often accompany our work. The group looks forward to our trips and to sharing the successes and challenges we each bring from our respective schools.

The Leader of Leaders Collaborative has provided me with unique and memorable experiences that have personally and professionally impacted me, which, in turn, have yielded positive results for my school. When the leader gets better, everyone wins! Whether you are new to educational leadership or a seasoned veteran, the Leader of Leaders Collaborative can inspire and promote leadership growth — and add some spice to your leadership recipe!

Dr. Miller can be reached at [mmiller@cysd.k12.pa.us](mailto:mmiller@cysd.k12.pa.us). ■

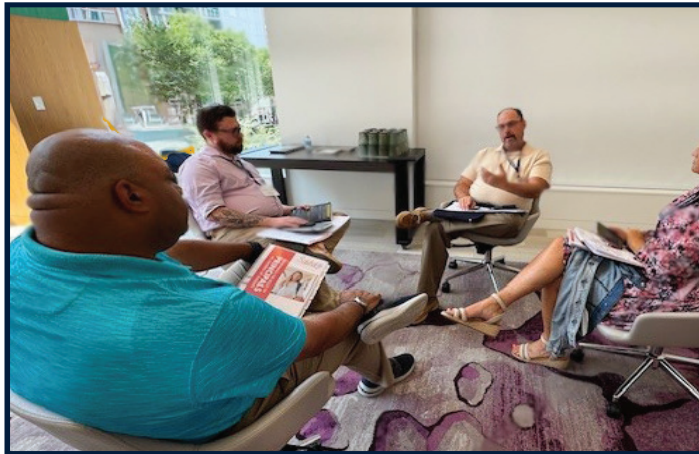
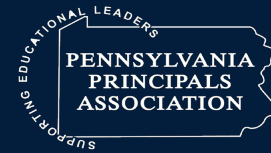
## Professional development offerings:

As a member of the PA Principals Association, you receive valuable Professional Development (PD) opportunities at a discounted cost or at no cost. These include Act 45 courses (in person and virtual — visit <https://tinyurl.com/tu7wef2k> for a complete list), our Leader of Leaders Collaborative, virtual book study courses and no-cost, virtual POWER HOURS as well as the SUMMIT for PA Educational Leaders, our in-person conference held annually in August.

## Questions regarding professional development:

If you have any questions regarding professional development opportunities offered by the PA Principals Association, please contact **Dr. Beth Haldeman, Director of Professional Development**, at (717) 732-4999 or [haldeman@papincipals.org](mailto:haldeman@papincipals.org).

# LEADER OF LEADERS COLLABORATIVE



**“An effective principal’s impact is stronger and broader than previously thought, making it ‘difficult to envision’ a higher return on investment in K-12 education than the cultivation of high-quality school leadership.”**

*Wallace Foundation,  
“How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research,”  
2021.*

## School Leadership Matters

Research consistently demonstrates that school leadership is among the most critical factors in student success. As the Wallace Foundation affirms, no investment yields a higher return than developing high-quality leadership. In support of this evidence, the Pennsylvania Principals Association is pleased to announce the launch of its third cohort of the Leader of Leaders Collaborative.

The **Leader of Leaders Collaborative** is built upon the framework of the *School Leader Paradigm* and centers on an experiential approach to professional growth. At its core are four immersive site visits to businesses, industries and non-educational organizations, through which participants gain firsthand insight into diverse operational models and organizational practices. Each visit is followed by structured reflection guided by a central question: What are the implications of this organization’s practices for school leadership?

Principals who join the **Collaborative** will participate in four, three-day in-person sessions, earning **90 Act 45 hours** upon completion, along with three, one-hour virtual check-in sessions held throughout the program year. Grounded in the *School Leader Paradigm*, the **Collaborative** positions participants in their role as lead learners within a learning organization. Through a sustained cycle of inquiry, participants will develop actionable leadership plans and examine the contextual forces that shape and influence their leadership.

### REGISTRATION

Scan the QR Code below to register!



**Earn 90 Act 45 Hours!**

### COST

The cost for the year-long experience is **\$3,750**.

This includes:

- Hotel accommodations – 8 nights.
- Meals for the four trips.
- Collaborative materials.
- Entrance fees where applicable.

Costs not included:

- Travel to four onsite visits: July 2026 Location TBD; CHOP, Philadelphia, PA; Rock Litzitz, Litzitz, PA; and U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA.

## PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

# Dr. David M. Wiedlich Selected as Pennsylvania's 2026 Principal of the Year



**Dr. David M. Wiedlich**, Principal of Radnor Middle School in the Radnor Township School District, has been named **Pennsylvania's 2026 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, Dr.

Wiedlich is a candidate for the National Secondary Principal of the Year.

"Dr. Wiedlich is a passionate, committed leader who genuinely cares about the success and well-being of his students, staff and the entire school community," said Dr. Eric Eshbach, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Principals Association.

An educator for 23.5 years and an administrator for 11.5 years, Dr. Wiedlich joined the Radnor Township Middle School as principal in 2019. Dr. Wiedlich began his teaching career in The School District of Philadelphia at John Welsh Elementary School (K-8). In 2003, he transitioned to the Downingtown Area School District, where he served as an English and Social Studies teacher. In 2014, Dr. Wiedlich assumed the role of assistant principal at Lionville Middle School also in the Downingtown Area School District.

Under his outstanding leadership, Dr. Wiedlich played a key role in developing and implementing a variety of essential programs and initiatives at his school. Among his most notable achievements are fostering a safe and inclusive culture and promoting student well-being. He spearheaded initiatives informed by data, analyzing academic performance, behavior and attendance trends to identify student needs and implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for equitable academic and behavioral interventions. Additionally, he designed and facilitated advisory programs to strengthen student connections and introduced recognition systems that celebrate soft skills — such as responsibility, creativity, collaboration and communication — alongside individual strengths. "Since the inception of the soft skills acknowledgement program in 2022, more than 400 students have been recognized for exceptional attributes," explained Dr. Wiedlich.

In addition, Dr. Wiedlich broadened student learning opportunities by leading the development of innovative electives in global connections, digital media, executive functioning, entrepreneurship and

emerging technologies, helping prepare students for a dynamic, globalized future.

One of his most significant contributions has been elevating student voice by establishing avenues for meaningful student input in school decisions through shaping policies on schedules, celebrations and military recognition events and fostering a stronger culture of belonging and respect.

His leadership and dedication to education have been recognized through his service on the Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils Board of Directors and the Editorial Review Board for *The Pennsylvania Administrator*. In addition, he authored several articles in *The Pennsylvania Administrator*.

Dr. Wiedlich's academic journey reflects his commitment to growth and innovations. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from The Pennsylvania State University and a Graduate Certificate in Peer Coaching and Collaboration from The Pennsylvania State University. He holds a Doctor of Educational Leadership and Superintendent Letter of Eligibility from Neumann University and is pursuing a Certificate in Advanced Educational Leadership from Harvard University (est. 2026).

Dr. Wiedlich is a husband to his wife, Kellie, a secondary school/college counselor and proud father of Lukas (13) and Michael (8). In his spare time, he enjoys coaching his boys in basketball, track and soccer, and is an avid fan of all Philadelphia sports. A cross-country and track athlete and coach at heart, he brings a family-centered perspective to his work, believing that strong connections are the foundations of thriving school communities. ■

*"We are incredibly proud of Dr. Wiedlich for being named Pennsylvania Principal of the Year, a recognition that reflects his outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to our students. His vision, integrity and deep care for our school community have strengthened our district in countless ways."*

Dr. Kenneth E. Batchelor  
Superintendent  
Radnor Township School District

## ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

# Dr. Danielle Ambrosia Named Pennsylvania's 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year



**Dr. Danielle Ambrosia**, an Assistant Principal at the State College Area High School in the State College Area School District, has been named **Pennsylvania's 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year by the Pennsylvania Principals Association.**

As a state winner in the National Association of Secondary School

Principals' (NASPP) Assistant Principal of the Year Program, Mrs. Ambrosia is a candidate for the National Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year.

"Danielle's passion for her students, her school and her fellow administrators highlights the vital role each member of the administrative team plays in creating a thriving school community. I am thrilled that Danielle Ambrosia has been selected to represent the Pennsylvania Principals Association as our 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year," said Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Principals Association.

An educator for 14 years and an administrator for four years, Dr. Ambrosia joined State College Area High School as an English teacher in 2009. She continued her career at State College Area School District as an equity teacher leader from 2018-2021 and as the varsity head cheer coach from 2010-2018. She has been in her current role as an assistant principal at State High since 2021. In addition, she served as a Penn State Professional Development Associate in the Professional Development School from June 2019 to June 2020.

"As an assistant principal, I have the privilege of working in the spaces where small moments add up to big impact. This award reflects the everyday moments and wins created by our students, staff and families. I am grateful to work alongside them and amplify the work that makes our school what it is. This award reflects the collective strength of our school community. Thank you to my incredible family: Tom, Tommy and Deanna, who have always supported my career and goals," said Dr. Ambrosia.

As an assistant principal, Dr. Ambrosia has collaborated closely with their staff and administrative team to strengthen the school culture, with a particular focus on student safety and well-being. A key part of this work has involved supporting the rollout of several school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) celebrations as well as hosting two annual Mental Health Summits — student-designed events created in partnership with community organizations to offer meaningful opportunities for connection and self-reflection.

According to Dr. Ambrosia, physical safety remains a top priority at State High. Since 2016–2017, she has been a member of her school's rapid response team. She continues to work closely with their security team and school resource officer (SRO) to maintain secure entrances and exits and refine emergency preparedness. "In collaboration with my principal and SRO, we launched the Student Safety Ambassador program. This initiative allows interested students to partner with our SRO to share safety information with peers, educate students about drills and emergency procedures and develop leadership skills in public safety and service," she added.

In addition, Dr. Ambrosia, along with their staff and administrative team, has been instrumental in developing and implementing structured supports for Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), focusing on student groups experiencing peer conflict, anger management challenges and difficulty with behavioral expectations and ninth-grade interdisciplinary collaboration. Her work with school-wide PBIS celebrations, Mental Health Summits, MTSS supports, ninth-grade interdisciplinary collaboration and safety-focused programs reflects her commitment to nurturing a school culture that prioritizes every student's emotional and physical well-being.

Dr. Ambrosia earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (English/Communications), a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction (Reading Specialist) and her School Leadership Certification from The Pennsylvania State University. She received a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Drexel University in December 2025.

She has presented at the state and national levels on important topics such as developing anti-racist educators and school cultures, transforming academic support systems, reducing discipline disparities through accountability and empowering teachers to use data meaningfully. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends. ■

*"This is an exceptional and well-deserved honor that reflects Danielle's dedication, leadership and unwavering commitment to our students, staff and school community. Danielle's work exemplifies the values we strive to uphold across the district, and her recognition brings pride to our entire school community."*

Curtis Johnson  
Superintendent  
State College Area School District

# Assistant Principal & Dean of Students SYMPOSIUM

March 23, 24, 25, April 8 & 9, 2026 • 9am - 3pm

Registration opens at 8:15 a.m • Lunch Provided • Cost \$49

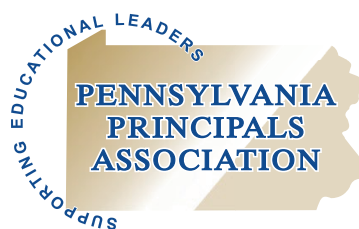
Sponsored by PA Principals, participants will explore practical strategies for building influence and strong relationships in everyday interactions, focusing time and energy on high-impact priorities, and designing simple systems that reduce recurring stress.

Throughout the day, there will be dedicated time for participants to choose topics most relevant to their work, brainstorm solutions with colleagues, and personalize their learning based on current challenges.

This session is engaging, highly practical, and focused on tools and strategies participants can use immediately.

This workshop is ideal for Assistant Principals and Deans of Students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

**Act 45 hours will be available for participants.**



*For any questions, please contact:*

Dr. Beth Haldeman  
Director of Professional Development  
[haldeman@paprincipals.org](mailto:haldeman@paprincipals.org)

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**State College Area High School**

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**Montgomery County IU 23**

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| 122 Valley Rd., Enola PA 17025

# RSS ROUNDUP

RSS ROUNDUP is written by your Regional Service Specialists (RSS): Peg Foster, Dr. Carl McBreen and Dr. Matthew Walsh, East Region; Tammie Burnaford, Susan Martin and Darren McLaurin, Central Region; and Yvonne Best-Proctor, Michael Allison and Dr. Carol Sprinker, West Region.

## When Winter Drags On: How School Leaders Can Boost Morale

By Michael Allison, West II Regional Service Specialist (RSS)



January, February and March — that time between the Christmas holiday break and spring break — can seem to drag on for everyone in the school community. Many schools have days off for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and President’s Day, but as winter wears on, it can still feel like we’re slipping into the winter blues. During the course of my 35 years as an educator, I have seen the impact of the minimal hours of daylight, the cold temperatures, the ongoing weather delays, the consecutive days of school and how they begin to take a toll on the entire school community. In combination, they create stress, tension and blasé feelings. When school leaders start to feel this way, the effect can ripple through our teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and most importantly, our students.

Leadership begins at the top, and as school leaders, we set the tone for the entire school community. And as principals, we play a key role in shaping a positive and healthy culture. As winter fatigue settles in, it becomes even more important to focus on community building and look for opportunities to strengthen morale. Our students and staff need us to be their sources of encouragement and optimism. During these months, the winter blues can leave people feeling irritable or anxious and may even contribute to a rise in discipline issues or signs of depression.

A few intentional steps can help keep your school moving steadily through this challenging stretch of winter.

- **Be intentional.** Move forward, creating positivity and developing a plan of action. A little advance planning can negate many of the challenges before they happen. If we already know how this time of year impacts our school community mindset, we must be proactive in supporting growth, learning and positivity in our school community.
- **Recognize and acknowledge the challenge.** First, be sure that your staff and students know that you understand the challenges and that you will

work with them to help alleviate some of the stress and challenge of this time of year with their input and feedback. A little empathy goes a long way in building community. As principal, you do not have to bear this burden alone — get others involved!

- **Develop a team approach.** Utilizing the input and thoughtfulness of others with your leadership shows a thoughtfulness and willingness to show care and concern across the school community. Do you have a staff social committee? A Parent Teacher Association? How about involving counselors, your student and staff leadership teams, National Honor Society, student councils and others for input, planning and even some financial support. Be open-minded as a leader and think outside the box while encouraging others to do the same. Some ideas may include feeding off the current Olympic hype and develop a winter school Olympics day or film a school “lip dub” video involving all your students and staff. And most importantly, try to have a little fun!



- **Take every opportunity to celebrate students and staff.** This would be a good time to incentivize positive behavior through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) reward days, pep rallies for athletic teams, assemblies or even a “staff versus students” volleyball or bocce game. February is a popular month for student councils and PTAs to launch kindness-focused activities.
- **Provide staff with incentives.** Recognize the important work your teachers do every day. Let them know they are valued, that their efforts make a real difference, and that the importance of their work cannot be overstated. They need that encouragement as winter drags on. Don’t underestimate how much simple treats, whether it’s a donut, muffin, bagel, or even a classic Eat’n Park Smiley Cookie in Western PA, can boost your team’s morale.  
Consider offering a few free dressdown days, perhaps tied to school spirit, grade-level themes

or a “show your college pride” day where teachers and staff wear shirts from their alma maters, seniors highlight their future college plans or students showcase the athletic teams they support.

- **Remember to prioritize your personal well-being.** A leader who is feeling down struggles to hide those feelings from students or staff. Recognize where you are and what you need. Maybe using a couple personal days for a long ski weekend or a quick trip to Key West is just what you need to recharge your own batteries so that you can be a positive role model for your students and staff. Maybe you just need a spa day, some exercise or some extra sleep! Whatever you choose to do, take care of yourself first — doing so puts you in a better position to support others.

Lead with positivity and purpose — these simple tips can reignite the excitement your school community is craving and chase away those winter blues! ■

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Michael Allison* is the West II Regional Service Specialist (RSS). He retired from Hopewell Area School District after serving as Principal of Hopewell High School. He can be reached at [allison@papprincipals.org](mailto:allison@papprincipals.org).

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# Career Academies: Creating Alternatives to Traditional College Pathways

By Dr. Christopher Caruso, Dr. Clayton LaCoe III and Dr. R. Jay Starnes



DR. CHRISTOPHER CARUSO



DR. CLAYTON LACOE III



DR. R. JAY STARNES

There are as many high school mission statements as there are high schools. Regardless of location, all schools aim to serve their students well. As time passes, we continue to learn what makes schools more effective. Recent research indicates a shift in the skills students need to meet the demands of our evolving world (Martinez, 2022). These skills can often be gained through post-secondary experiences leading to certifications and credentials outside of traditional four-year college preparatory programs. Schools must consider alternative paths for students, moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach.

## Career Academy Model: An Overview

Wallenpaupack Area School District serves a 325-square-mile rural area in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Once known for manufacturing, transport, lumber and farming, the area’s economy now centers on hospitality and tourism. Currently, Wallenpaupack Area High School is organized into four College and Career Academies that create small learning communities, integrating academics with career-focused classes. College and career counselors and local employers provide students with career path insights and work-based learning opportunities, expanding their skills and overall career path insights (Meeder, 2016). These efforts, grounded in research, aim to increase student engagement and equip them with skills and credentials for successful post-secondary transitions (Fletcher et al., 2020; Hackmann et al., 2018; Kemple, 2008). **Table 1** outlines the various pathways offered within each of the academies at Wallenpaupack Area High School (WAHS).

**Table 1 - WAHS Academies and Associated Pathways**

Academy	Pathways
Freshman (Grade 9)	A focus on the alignment of individual strengths and interests to broad career fields by emphasizing foundational literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills that enhance the application of knowledge to unknown contexts through engaging classroom experiences.
Academy 1 (Grades 10-12)	Automotive Technology*, Building Construction Trades*, Conservation and the Environment, Liberal Arts, Outdoor Power Equipment Technology*, Visual Fine Arts
Academy 2 (Grades 10-12)	Allied Health*, Childcare*, Education and Human Services, Exercise Science and Sports Medicine*, Medical Sciences, Protective Services*
Academy 3 (Grades 10-12)	Aviation, Business, Marketing, and Finance, Computer Science and Programming, Culinary Arts*, Engineering Technology*

**Note.** Pathways marked with an asterisk (\*) indicate a state-approved Career and Technical Education program.

Planning for this model began in 2015 as school administrators developed a proposal outline to present to district stakeholders, which included the rationale, a K-5 plan, a 6-8 plan, a Freshman Academy plan, a 10-12 Academy plan and an overall implementation plan. We chose Career Academies for the rich contexts they offer, the authenticity they demand and the alignment they present for our community in terms of academic preparation and workforce skills development.

Students are not bound by their initial choices; pathways are not the equivalent of declaring a major, and students can move in and out as they discover what they enjoy — or do not. However, like the world at large, there are limits and hard decisions to make. These decisions are made intentionally and with strong support from counselors, faculty, administration and families of *all* students.

## Career Academy Model: Supporting Pieces Starting Early

We recognize that post-secondary preparation must extend beyond high school. In developmentally appropriate ways, we provide experiences for our students to inspire them to think about life beyond school. For instance, as part of our second-grade English Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum, students engage in an extended unit focused on jobs and communities. For these young learners, discussing their immediate surroundings is fitting. Throughout this unit, children work on answering “research questions” that help them learn more about their local community and the jobs people do. They read both fiction and nonfiction, hear from guest speakers and write about what they have learned. At the intermediate level, third through fifth graders participate in career days, where local community members share insights about their professions. In middle school, we dedicated a course to

this work, *High School 101*, designed to help students navigate the Career Academy Model and engage with high school students and faculty to explore their interests.

## Seminar Course Sequence

Accompanying our Academy and Pathway



system is our *Seminar Course Sequence*. Students experience a seminar course each year of high school. These nongraded courses provide a forum for students to reflect on their Academy and Pathway experiences, while supporting them in obtaining their required artifacts for the Career Education and Work (CEW) standards. Taught by select faculty, this series also helps students understand the power of community through service, develop soft skills, earn industry credentials and gain experience in personal finance. This work culminates in a Senior Seminar Capstone presentation in which every student presents a reflection on their high school experience and discusses their future aspirations.

### ***The Role of College and Career Counselors***

Each Academy has a dedicated *College and Career Counselor*. These counselors focus on post-secondary planning and work closely with but separate from students' school counselors. They develop external experiences for all students so that everyone has the opportunity to experience the academic and work world outside of school. They also work closely with seminar teachers to help students develop resumes, prepare for on-campus job interviews and prepare their Capstone presentations. Our college and career counselors are relationship experts and work hard to build partnerships in the community that provide academic and work-related opportunities for all students.

### ***Student Successes in the WAHS Academy Model Feedback from Alumni***

Recent graduates from various post-secondary pathways — traditional colleges, trades or military — were asked to explain how the WAHS Academy Model prepared them for their pursuits beyond high school. Below are testimonials from several alumni:

- “Graduating from this model allowed me to actively pursue and focus on my career goals while keeping my options open to broader horizons. As someone who continued with

the same focus from high school to college, I entered well ahead of my peers in both major-specific knowledge and skills.” – *Class of 2023, attending college*

- “Being able to focus and learn something in high school for four years gave me that extra boost coming out ... I had a head start on what I wanted to do.” – *Class of 2023, workforce apprentice*
- “The Academy Model allowed my high school education to center around my interests and exposed me to real life experiences. Combining what I learned in the classroom and out in the field set me up perfectly for my first year of college, giving me a clear head start compared to my peers.” – *Class of 2024, attending college*
- “The Academy Model allowed me to pick an interest of mine and delve deeper into the subject, developing my passion for engineering. I gained crucial skills that would help me to graduate with high honors.” – *Class of 2023, enlisted in the military*
- “Learning from this model positioned me significantly ahead of the learning curve and equipped me for success in college. I was able to explore my interests early on, which ignited a passion in me to strive for high achievements and surpass my own expectations.” – *Class of 2023, attending college*

### ***What the Data Show***

We collect, analyze and discuss data related to the Academy Model for reflection and planning purposes, helping us maintain our focus. We have found that our model enhances students' opportunities to meet the state-mandated Act 158 graduation pathway, given the abundance of industry credentials available. Additionally, our graduation profile document aligns with the many internal and external community experiences offered to students in this model. As we reviewed Act 158 data for the graduating class of 2025, we noted the following:

- All students have a graduation pathway — zero principal waivers are needed for graduates of the class of 2025.
- The percentage of students utilizing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) graduation pathway has decreased from 9.92% in 2024 to 6.61% in 2025.
- Approximately 20% of students in the class of 2025 used industry credentials as evidence toward a graduation pathway.

### Moving Forward with the Career Academy Model

Moving forward, we must develop a more robust accountability system that goes beyond meeting the minimum requirements of Act 158 to continue to help us answer: How do we know that we are being effective? We see this in three ways. First, we are developing a system of professional learning communities that uses student work to improve teaching and learning. When we look at student work, we ask:

1. Where is the evidence of developing understanding that can be built upon?
2. What are the next steps for each student based on this evidence?
3. Are there any issues or concerns with the evidence?

Next, we need to use data from our Keystone Exams to ensure the Academy model is providing equal opportunities for students to access teaching that leads to solid test performance regardless of Academy or Pathway.

Finally, we must analyze data to check equity and access. We will examine counseling interactions, external experiences, and artifact expectations across demographic groups. Everyone has access, but are they utilizing it equitably? This analysis will allow the Career Academy Model at WASD to grow and improve student experience.

For further information, please contact Dr. Caruso at [ccarus@whsdk12.com](mailto:ccarus@whsdk12.com). ■

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**ABOUT THE AUTHORS:** *Dr. Christopher J. Caruso serves as the principal of Honesdale High School and is also an adjunct instructor at Wilkes University and Marywood University. He has over 20 years of experience in education, with 10 of those years serving as an administrator in the Wallenpaupack Area School District. He currently specializes in instructional leadership, teacher professional development and professional learning communities, where a focus is placed on moving learning forward for students. He obtained a Doctor of Education degree from Wilkes University. He resides in Lakeville, Pennsylvania.*

*Dr. Clayton LaCoe III serves the Wallenpaupack Area School District as Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment in addition to serving as an adjunct instructor at Marywood University. He has over 30 years of experience in education, specializing in instructional systems design, early numeracy acquisition and school leadership focused on continuous improvement. He earned a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He resides in Ransom Township, Pennsylvania.*

*Dr. R. Jay Starnes serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Wallenpaupack Area School District, where he plays a pivotal role in shaping educational policies and programs that promote college and career readiness for all students. In addition, he serves as an adjunct instructor at East Stroudsburg University and Marywood University. In recognition of his dedication to student success, Dr. Starnes was honored as the 2022–2023 School Administrator of the Year by the Pennsylvania Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). He earned a Doctor of Education degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania/East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. He resides in Tafton, Pennsylvania.*

# Authenticity Prompting with AI

By William S. Ostroski



Artificial Intelligence (AI) has taken the world by storm due to the COVID-19 shutdown during the 2019-2020 school year. It has more recently grabbed hold of education and has thrust students and teachers into a realm where students can get work done faster, and maybe more

efficiently, but at the cost of critical thinking and their own thoughts. Teachers have also had to adapt to determining students' original work while keeping themselves accountable for creating lesson plans with AI that reflect their own teaching and understanding. "Things have changed" is a constant statement heard through many educational circles and in all areas of academia. Everyone can discuss whether it has been good or bad, but the question of what is next is always at the forefront (Juliani, 2025).

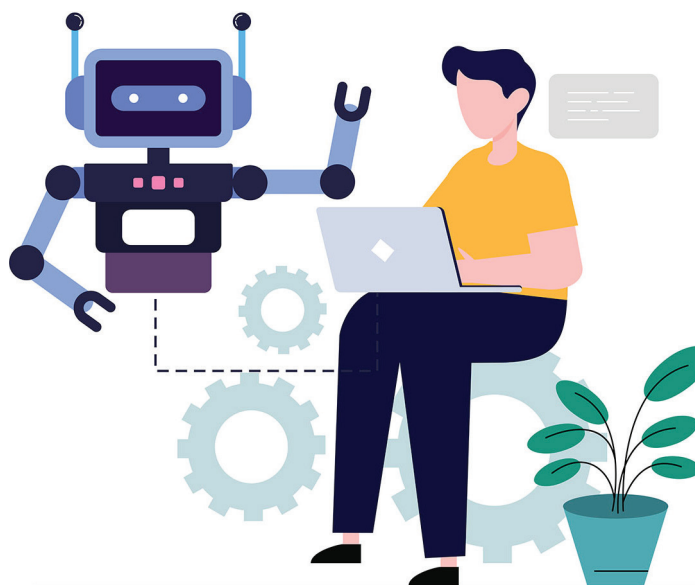
I have found that prompting, the act of entering a question or information into a Language Learning Model (LLM) to elicit an outcome or content, is the most important aspect in keeping AI-driven materials authentic and original. Teachers need high-quality professional development, not only to show students how to enhance this skill but also to strengthen it for themselves. A big part of developing this ability comes from exposure — letting teachers use AI in the same ways they want their students to. Anastasia Goudy has created an Augmented Thinking Protocol that does just that. There are five core values that need to be attended to such as: Internal Locus of Control, Intellectual Humility, Epistemic Curiosity, Relational Thinking and Tool, not an Oracle (Goudy, 2025). What this framework comes down to is allowing the AI program you are using to truly be a crutch for idea enhancement, not overall idea creation. Users need to treat AI as a mirror, not a master, in order to truly bring out their original thoughts through prompting the AI LLM (Language Learning Model) with its own questions of discovery and not basic prompts that produce basic work (Goudy, 2025).

Ms. Goudy really surprised me as she worked for me as a STEM teacher when I was a director of instruction at a charter school in the Lehigh Valley and she always was student first. This Augmented Thinking Protocol provides six steps: Intention Check, Context Mapping, Prompt Crafting, Response Reflection, Cross-Check and Expand and Synthesis and Decision (Goudy, 2025). This protocol allowed educators to guide their own, or a student's, input through the prompting process

to create an authentic and organic piece of work. One of the central questions in Prompt Crafting was, "How can I ask this in a way that invites depth rather than shortcuts?" Other questions include: What did the AI give me and what assumptions are present, what do I agree with and what do I need to verify or add, and most importantly, what will I take forward and what is mine? (Goudy, 2025).

This provided a robust framework that showed teachers how to guide students toward producing the kind of meaningful work educators had always wanted to see — while thoughtfully leveraging AI, acknowledging that students were likely to use it anyway. I realized that these methods might actually encourage students to return to their own ideas and rely less on AI after being given a structured framework for how to think and ask questions. Consider the sentence stems teachers already use, along with visual organizers and reflective journaling. These are all strategies students might have found uninteresting, but when framed through the use of AI, they could feel more engaging and worthwhile. Over time, students could begin to see that while AI might help them get past a brief thinking block, their own ability to think and ask strong questions could take them even further.

Traditional Bloom's Taxonomy is like a ladder, where learners start at the bottom by remembering concepts and then move on to applying, analyzing, evaluating and finally creating. However, the gateway to learning with AI is first creating, which induces a reverse Bloom's Taxonomy ladder (Juliani, 2025). Students need to start by creating, then evaluate their creation, analyze its



effectiveness in achieving the desired result, apply what they learned, understand it well enough to explain their ideas and finally remember the key facts and concepts to prepare for future challenges within their model. Teachers must understand this vital aspect in order to fully grasp the AI concept and deliver it properly to today's learners.

“When teachers model the Augmented Thinking Protocol aloud, especially when uncertain, they send a clear message: Thinking is a brave, and ongoing process. Modeling is both pedagogy and permission. It makes visible the invisible work of cognition, showing students that real learning often involves wrestling with ambiguity, revising in real time and seeking feedback” (Goudy, 2025). What an absolutely profound quote by Goudy. Isn't this what we want from our students to become active members of society in all contexts? This creates a deep understanding of the things that we want from people today. We used to call it common sense, now we can call it common thinking. It has depth, it has individuality, it has promise.

Professional development can be offered to teachers to help them improve their practice using either the Augmented Thinking Protocol or Reverse Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers in an Introduction to Business class, guiding students as they create a small food truck business, can use LLMs to encourage ideas that are both thoughtful and original. Teachers should first have students do an intention check, where they get together in groups to decide what they want to explore and why. Next, teachers can guide students through context mapping, having them discuss what they already know and use the LLM to generate prompts and questions to fill in the gaps — for example, asking which menu style would be most eye-catching for customers. Then, teachers can help students with how to create depth through prompt crafting. After asking the LLM which menu style is most eye-catching, students can refine their questions to create a focused menu that aligns with their specific business goals. Teachers can then guide students to reflect on what AI produced and identify any assumptions it may have

made. This allows students to start generating their own critical thinking and not allow the LLM to perform the shortcut for them. Finally, the students can work through what they agree with, what they need to verify and expand upon through another medium and what they can add for more authenticity. This step allows students to contemplate what they can take forward with their project, what was organically theirs and what was produced through the LLM to help them discern the difference.

Schools should consult AI experts with education backgrounds to design professional development that benefits both teachers and their students. School districts should do the following to provide a robust framework:

- Find experts versed in AI and LLMs that have backgrounds in education and analytics.
- Conduct interviews with individuals or companies to determine how they are going to be able to meet the needs of their educators.
- Determine the best fit for your district or school
- Map out a yearlong professional development process to provide continuous and efficient support for teachers and how they are learning, implementing and troubleshooting working with students and LLMs.
- Engage in professional development with educators and attain feedback throughout the process to help make necessary adaptations.
- Develop and provide a support system beyond the initial implementation to showcase continuous growth and support modeling of the initiative beyond a one-year timeline.
- Continue to work with experts beyond the initial year to help make revisions as AI and LLMs grow and adapt with newer technologies to allow administrators to facilitate professional development offerings in the future.

For further information, please contact the author at [wostroski@nazarethasd.org](mailto:wostroski@nazarethasd.org). ■

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# Partnering for Student Mental Health

By Jonalyn Romeo, M.Ed.



The mental health crisis in the nation and in public schools is immense. Mental health challenges prior to the COVID pandemic were significant, only to increase in the years following due to the isolation our students experienced (Brown, C. & Karrington, N.K, 2025).

Social media has had a profoundly negative effect on our students. The comparison trap, cyber bullying, doom scrolling and the lack of personal face-to-face interactions and healthy socialization have all taken a toll on students' young minds and self-confidence, leading to a plethora of mental health issues. generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, forms of depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are just a few of the diagnoses we see in our students as a result of the increase in limitless and inappropriate use of social media (Chatterjee, R., 2022).

As with most things in life, one's viewpoint depends on the lens being used. Social media can be used for good, as a means to encourage, share positivity and connect with others. Adults in general, parents, educators, need to do a better job at being diligent and being a role model for the kids by modeling boundaries and time limits with social media. We need to demonstrate for the students how to "tune out the noise." Whether a child is six or 16, that child is watching and absorbing.

A March 2025, School Pulse Panel Survey by the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that 53% of public schools reported an increase in their students seeking school based mental health support. Fortunately, I consult with a district that for the last 25+ years has prioritized mental health and wellness for their students. In partnership with the

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (Human Services), the New Castle Area School District (NCASD) in Western Pennsylvania offers a partial hospitalization program in each of its school buildings. Being classified as an inner-city school, and being a highly transient district, many students come to school with significant mental and behavioral issues. The partial programs are offered for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Each program is staffed with Human Services master-level therapists, a child psychiatrist and program director that work alongside district teachers and paraprofessionals. Students are on a slightly abbreviated school day and receive half-day academics and half-day counseling every day. Students are self-contained within two classrooms each per building and remain in the program as long as they are willing participants. Some students reach their goals within a few months, while others may be in for a year or longer. Parents attend a biweekly meeting with the student, child psychiatrist and program staff.

As students near their discharge from the program, a transition meeting occurs and a team decision is made as to how best to reintegrate the student into the mainstream. It might start with one class at a time for a couple of weeks, it all depends on the student. The partial programs service both regular and special education students. The programs are mental health programs, not special education placements nor alternative schooling.

Another service the district offers, again in partnership with Human Services, is school-based counseling. A therapist is assigned to the district, who sees students in each of the buildings on a rotating basis. Students can be referred for counseling through our Student Assistance Program (SAP) teams, or the student might already have an open case with Human Services. The therapist creates a schedule based on the need within



each of our buildings, and then services accordingly for approximately four to five days per week.

A third readily available support service is the presence of a crisis liaison. The liaison is housed within the junior/senior high school because that is where the majority of the crisis-type situations occur. If crisis is needed in one of our other buildings, the staff follow protocol and call the county's crisis line. The call then dispatches an available therapist, who may or may not be the school liaison.

The funding for the partial programs is paid for by the student's insurance, which is provided by the parent prior to intake. Human Services bills the insurance for the services, and the district also supplements an agreed-upon amount to the agency per student. If a neighboring district has a student in need of a partial hospitalization program, a slot is contracted out to that particular district. The district in need pays the NCASD a daily rate, which is comparable to other partial

programs if not a little cheaper. The benefit is that the student from the neighboring district is able to receive services within their broader community rather than traveling a great distance. Contracting out is not done frequently because the NCASD uses most, if not all, of the slots at any given time. Funding for the school-based liaison and crisis worker is paid for through a Safety and Security grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

For any district in need of mental health services for their students, I cannot emphasize enough the value in partnering with your local mental health agency. Partnering and working together is a win-win for the students, their families and the community. The aforementioned programs have serviced at least 1,300 students throughout their existence, with more to come. School districts seeking additional information may contact [jonalyn.romeo@comcast.net](mailto:jonalyn.romeo@comcast.net). ■

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jonalyn Romeo, M.Ed.,** is a retired public-school administrator with over 20 years' experience. After retiring from the New Castle Area School District, she continued to work with the district as an independent contractor under Jonalyn Romeo Pupil Services Consultant LLC. Mrs. Romeo has served as director of pupil services, assistant principal for grades 6-12 and assistant to the director of pupil services. Her teaching experience includes emotional support, learning support and gifted support in public school as well as out-of-district placements and court-appointed placements.

Mrs. Romeo has conducted peer monitoring for the state, served as the district McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison and has experience with English Language Learner (EL) programming. She served as an adjunct faculty member for Slippery Rock University for several years and is a member of Council for Exceptional Children, Council for Administrators in Special Education and the Pennsylvania Principals Association.

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# Challenges and Collaborative Strategies for K-12 Dual Enrollment Students with Disabilities Transitioning to Higher Education

By Maura L. Roberts, Ph.D., Michelle Mitchell and Everett Deibler



DR. MAURA L. ROBERTS



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## The Philosophies of Transition

The successful transition of students with disabilities from K-12 to postsecondary environments hinges on bridging the systemic and philosophical chasm between the two systems. While K-12 operates under the educational entitlement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), providing proactive services, higher education operates under the equal access civil rights model of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires students to initiate services and demonstrate self-determination. To navigate this shift effectively, we cannot wait until graduation. Instead, collaboration must prioritize building student capacity. This requires K-12 to integrate instruction in essential life competencies — such as health, finance and self-management — and infuse self-determination

into transition plans. By formalizing this proactive collaboration and aligning preparation with college realities, educational leaders can ensure every student with a disability is genuinely empowered to achieve equitable, independent and sustained success (Kohler et al., 2016).

## The Framework for Success: Evidence-Based Predictors

To move from philosophy to practice, schools must rely on data-driven strategies. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT: C) offers a framework of predictors that correlates with improved outcomes in education, employment and independent living. By integrating these strategies into K-12 planning, schools can provide the roadmap families are desperately seeking.

- **Career Technical Education (CTE):** Align CTE with student interests to provide marketable skills and pathways to college certifications.
- **Goal Setting:** Help students set realistic goals for academic and career aspirations, supported by Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.
- **Paid Employment and Work Experience:** Collaborate with businesses to create internship opportunities

and work studies offering vocational training.

- **Program of Study Alignment:** Ensure high school coursework prepares students for college requirements, particularly through dual enrollment programs.
- **Inclusion in General Education:** Expose students to the rigors of general education with appropriate support, utilizing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to mirror college environments.
- **Self-Advocacy and Determination:** Instruct students to identify and articulate their needs, understand their rights and navigate college challenges.
- **Youth Autonomy/Decision Making:** Promote self-determination regarding future pathways; K-12 institutions should facilitate student engagement in their own IEP meetings.
- **Self-Care and Independent Living:** Integrate instruction on independent living, health services and financial literacy into transition plans.
- **Parent Expectations and Preparation:** Conduct workshops about college life and student self-advocacy to ease the transition to independence.
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Establish cross-level mentoring programs where college students with disabilities guide high school students.
- **Navigating the Landscape: Systemic Shifts and Family Realities.** Implementing these predictors is critical because the current landscape is fraught with challenges, including complex environments and social stigmas (Kutscher et al., 2019; National Disability Center, 2025). Students accustomed to the K-12 environment rely on a supportive structure where educators and parents proactively identify and advocate for their needs. In contrast, college demands strong executive functioning skills to manage multiple assignments, independent study strategies and the daunting expectation of dedicating considerable time outside of class to coursework. Even dual enrollment programs, which offer academic exposure, often fail to bridge this gap because they do not resolve the disparities in disability support protocols. Without adequate preparation, students may struggle to access available resources such as tutoring or advising, leading to isolation and disengagement.

### The Legal and Documentation Shift

The most pervasive hurdle is the shift in legal frameworks. In K-12, IDEA is an educational benefit law designed to promote success, allowing modifications such as altered grading or reduced workloads. Conversely, higher education operates under the ADA and Section 504 — civil rights laws designed to prevent discrimination, not guarantee outcomes. This shift creates a practical barrier regarding documentation between the two systems. Moreover, IDEA mandates that K-12 schools identify students who may have special needs and conduct evaluations to address their learning needs. In contrast, colleges require students to provide recent, professional documentation (e.g., psychological or medical) that diagnoses the disability and details functional limitations. Students often struggle to access support because they are accustomed to a structure where educators identify and advocate for their needs. In college, they must independently access accommodations and articulate their needs to professors, which can be overwhelming without prior preparation.

### The Family Perspective: A Sudden Silence.

For families in our communities, this transition often feels like hitting a wall. In the K-12 system, parents are deeply involved — monitoring online portals and proactively advocating for accommodations. Federal privacy laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sharply curtail parent involvement when a student enters college and strictly limit college staff from disclosing academic or disability-related information to parents without the student’s written consent.

Many parents do not fully grasp that an IEP or 504 Plan does not automatically carry over to college. Furthermore, they are often unaware that a student’s academic performance impacts financial aid eligibility, adding economic stress to the family unit. This shift from a hands-on advocacy role to a facilitative one is a complex, emotionally taxing adjustment.

### Conclusion: The Charge for K-12 Principals – Leading the Way

To prevent students from “falling through the cracks” during the transition to higher education, K-12 principals must lead a culture shift within their schools. Improving post-secondary outcomes requires moving beyond simply signing off on transition plans and instead adopting a proactive, three-pronged approach to leadership:

- 1. Start Early and Build Autonomy:** Principals should ensure that transition planning is not just a paperwork exercise at age 16, but a pedagogical focus. Schools must move beyond compliance by ensuring plans focus on strategies for autonomously identifying impediments.
  - Implement a Student IEP Rubric:** Principals should mandate the use of student IEP rubrics at least once a year. This tool ensures students can articulate their own accommodations, understand their specific disability and identify the support they will need in college. (*See appended checklist*)
  - Set Actionable Transition Goals:** Students should be required to set a specific transition goal to research and learn the Disability Support Services (DSS) process of the college they intend to attend. (*See appended checklist*)
  - Student Led Meetings:** Principals should encourage students to lead their own IEP meetings, taking steps to lead up to final autonomy in this process, to practice the self-efficacy required in higher education (Waldron et al., 2025).
- 2. Educate and Empower Families:** Administrators must help families anticipate the “FERPA cliff.” And shift their engagement from “advocacy” to “preparation.” (*See Appendix A*)
  - Host Transition Events:** Schools should prioritize transition fairs and host dedicated information sessions for both parents and students to discuss the differences between IDEA (high school) and ADA (college).

Appendix A – Transition Training Topics for School Communities

Topic Category	Key Information to Cover	Stakeholder Focus
Legal Framework	Shifting from IDEA (Success) to ADA/Section 504 (Access). Understanding that "Special Education" as a concept ends at high school graduation.	Parents & Staff
The Documentation Gap	High school IEPs/504s are not "automatic" tickets to college services. Students need recent evaluations and a focus on functional limitations.	Parents & Students
Self-Advocacy & Disclosure	Students must "self-identify" in college. Professors cannot seek out students; the student must initiate the accommodation process.	Students
Student-Led IEP Meetings	Training students to facilitate their own IEP meetings to practice articulating their strengths, weaknesses, and needed supports.	Students & Staff
Transition Goals	Writing specific, measurable goals in the IEP that focus on independent living, time management, and navigating disability services.	Staff
Instructional Shifts	Moving from modified curriculum (changing <i>what</i> you learn) to accommodations (changing <i>how</i> you access what everyone else learns).	Students & Parents
Privacy & FERPA	Once a student is 18 or in college, parents no longer have automatic access to grades or professors without written consent.	Parents
Financial Responsibility	Schools pay for evaluations in K-12; students/families pay for them in college. Planning for these costs is vital.	Parents

- **Consistent Communication:** Principals should utilize newsletters to maintain regular communication with parents, increasing awareness of college processes and the financial implications of academic performance on financial aid.
- **Shift the Dynamic:** Helping parents pivot early from “manager” to “coach” through these channels can significantly reduce the emotional strain of the transition.

### 3. Formalize Institutional Partnerships and Staff

- **Capacity:** Reliance on informal handoffs is insufficient; principals must seek formal collaborations with local colleges and disability service offices.
- **Professional Development:** Provide targeted professional development for school counselors regarding the specific nuances of the post-secondary transition process for students with

disabilities.

- **Co-Develop Resources:** Invite college advisors to high school transition meetings and co-develop scalable resources like transition videos and flowcharts.
- **Train Dual Enrollment Staff:** Ensure that dual enrollment instructors teaching at the high schools are trained on the distinct differences between K-12 and higher education disability laws to prevent support that would not be available in a college classroom.

By addressing these systemic gaps and providing student self-determination, school administrators can ensure that the path to higher education is not a leap of faith, but a well-prepared step toward independence.

For more information, contact Dr. Roberts at [Mroberts7@lccc.edu](mailto:Mroberts7@lccc.edu). ■

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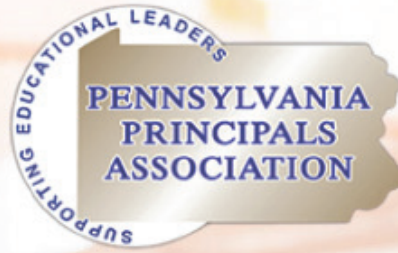
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**Michelle Mitchell** is a Disability Learning Specialist at Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC). She earned a Master of Education in Rehabilitation Counseling from Pennsylvania State University and has been a professional in the field for over 25 years. Additionally, she has endeavored to change opportunities by changing the way our culture interprets disability and championing liberation. With more than 20 years of experience at LCCC and numerous community connections, Ms. Mitchell has collaborated on several projects to open doors to equity across her community. She can be reached at [mmitchell@lccc.edu](mailto:mmitchell@lccc.edu).

**Everett Deibler** is the Director of Strategy and Engagement at J. Badger Consulting (JBC). He has a Master of Arts in Special Education and Human Development from George Washington University. Prior to joining JBC, he spent more than five years as a learning specialist at Lehigh Carbon Community College and continues to serve as an adjunct professor. In addition, Mr. Deibler has over 12 years of experience facilitating programs and discussions on local, state and national levels, focusing on student empowerment, person-centered approaches, inclusion, disability awareness and disability sensitivity. He can be reached at [everett@jbadgerconsultinginc.org](mailto:everett@jbadgerconsultinginc.org).

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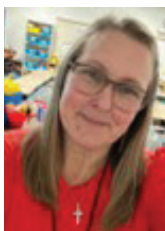
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## NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Araby Collins



*“I look forward to forming connections with other leaders in order to continue growing and learning how to be a purposeful, supportive leader. Communicating with other leaders will help me gain the knowledge and experience they have to share.”*

Araby is in her first year as Assistant Principal of Trimmer Elementary School in West York School District. Prior to moving into this position, she taught for 31 years in Littlestown Area School District. Her heart has always been and will always be in education. ■

# What CDT Results Really Tell Us About Student Achievement and Equity

By John D. Kretschmer, Ed.D.



In Pennsylvania, many educators rely on **Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDTs)** to get a quick sense of how students are progressing. These assessments help teachers understand what students already know and where they may need extra support (PDE, 2004). But a question that often comes

up is: How well do CDT scores actually predict how students will do on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)? And even more importantly: Are these predictions equally accurate for students from low-income backgrounds? As principals, we want to make sure every student, regardless of their circumstances, has access to strong instruction and the right supports (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2020; Mooney & Evans, 2023). That's why a recent study in the Wayne Highlands School District took a closer look at how well the CDT predicts PSSA outcomes for low-socioeconomic status (SES) students and how school leaders can use this information effectively (Kretschmer, 2025).

To better understand the relationship between CDTs and PSSAs, we looked at the results of students in grades six, seven and eight at one of our middle schools. The goal wasn't to get overly technical, but instead to look at some practical questions:

- Can CDT scores give us a reliable sense of how low-SES students will do on the PSSA?
- Does the relationship between CDT and PSSA scores look different depending on the student's socioeconomic background?
- Are there noticeable performance differences between low-SES students and their higher-SES peers?

The idea was to take the assessments we already use on a regular basis and see how well they match up, then use that information to guide more equitable support for students.

We kept the approach simple and focused. We gathered English Language Arts CDT scores and compared them to the same students' PSSA results later in the year. We worked with data from students in grades six through eight and separated the results by socioeconomic status, using free or reduced-price lunch eligibility to identify low-SES students (Kretschmer, 2025). The goal wasn't to create an academic research

project; it was to make sense of the data we already have and understand how principals and teachers can interpret it in ways that truly help students (Glickman, 2002).

Here is what we discovered:

- **CDT results generally connect well with PSSA performance.** Across the board, students who performed well on the CDT often went on to perform well on the PSSA (PDE, 2024).
- **But when we looked at the data by socioeconomic status, the picture changed.** For students who were not low-SES, the CDT and PSSA scores lined up pretty closely. For low-SES students, the connection was more inconsistent. This suggests that for low-SES students, outside factors such as access to resources, home support, test-taking experiences or other challenges may affect how accurately their CDT scores predict their later PSSA results (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2020; Mooney & Evans, 2023).

Here is what this means for us in school leadership roles:

1. **CDTs are great diagnostic tools, but they shouldn't be used alone.** They help teachers understand strengths and gaps, but they shouldn't be treated as the only indicator of how students will perform on the PSSA (PDE, 2024).
2. **We must look at data through an equity lens.** A test score doesn't tell the full story. When looking at CDT results for low-SES students, we need to remember the outside factors that may be affecting performance (Mooney & Evans, 2023).
3. **Teachers need support in understanding what CDT data really means.** Many teachers use CDT reports, but not everyone feels confident interpreting the data. Providing professional development, or pairing experienced teachers with newer staff, can help ensure data is used effectively and fairly (Glickman, 2002).

Some practical recommendations for school leaders are:

- **Use CDT data primarily as a teaching tool.** Encourage teachers to use CDTs to identify learning needs: not to predict final outcomes (PDE, 2024).

- **Look for patterns across student groups.**

Regularly review CDT results by socioeconomic status and other demographics to make sure your instructional supports are equitable (Mooney & Evans, 2023).

- **Increase data literacy among staff.**

Provide professional development focused on interpreting assessment data. Encourage mentorship so new teachers see how veteran teachers analyze trends and plan instruction (Glickman, 2002).

- **Strengthen support systems for low-SES students.** At Wayne Highlands, our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework includes academic, behavioral and mental-health supports. Our Community and School Based Behavioral Health partnership and outside counseling agencies help connect low-SES students and families to the resources they need. CDT data helps us identify gaps early so we can provide targeted, meaningful interventions (Kretschmer, 2025).

“CDTs remain a valuable resource for teachers and principals across Pennsylvania.”

- **Communicate clearly and positively with families.** When sharing assessment information, especially with families facing challenges, focus on growth and next steps rather than just proficiency labels (Mooney & Evans, 2023).

CDTs remain a valuable resource for teachers and principals across Pennsylvania. They give us timely insights

into student learning and help guide instruction in meaningful ways. But they're only one piece of the puzzle. For low-SES students in particular, CDT data should be interpreted alongside classroom work, teacher input, and an understanding of each student's circumstances. When we as school leaders thoughtfully balance data with equity and context, we're better positioned to support every student on their path to success (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2020; Mooney & Evans, 2023).

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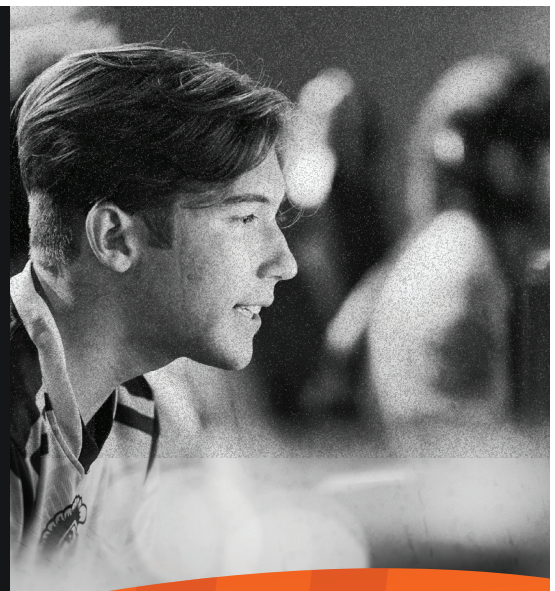
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# I Made the Attendance Plan: Now What?

## Why Relationship Building and Follow-Through Are Critical for Improving Attendance

By Shelly R. Wagner



Throughout 20 1/2 years in education, including 13 1/2 years as an administrator, I have been responsible for monitoring and addressing student attendance. While I created numerous attendance plans and brought many families to court for truancy proceedings, I noticed a recurring issue: a lack of follow-through and an insufficient focus on relationship building.

Attendance plays a pivotal role in a student's academic success and must be treated with utmost priority. Research has demonstrated that when students miss 10% or more of a school year, their risk of dropping out increases significantly and their academic performance in math and reading tends to lag far behind peers (Attendance Works, 2014). Studies conducted in California revealed that approximately 17% of students who were chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade — defined as missing roughly two days per month — were not proficient readers by third grade (Attendance Works, 2014). Nationally, two-thirds of fourth graders are not proficient in reading, and 80% of those students come from low-income families (Attendance Works, 2024).

Research from both Ready and Chicago suggests that when low-income students maintain regular attendance, they can outperform higher-income peers by making the biggest academic gains (Attendance Works, 2014). Similarly, a Baltimore study confirmed that students can get back on track academically when their attendance improves (Attendance Works, 2014). Yet students living in poverty are disproportionately affected by chronic absenteeism due to a lack of access to the resources necessary to make up missed lessons (Bruner, Discher & Chang, 2011). Another Baltimore study found that students who missed fewer than two days in September went on to have an average of fewer than two absences per month for the rest of the school year. Conversely, students were five times more likely to be chronically absent for the year if they missed between two and four days in September, and 16 times more likely if they missed four or more days (Olsen, 2014). Chronic absences are highly predictive of future outcomes: students with 10 or fewer absences were nearly two and a half times more likely to graduate than those who missed 10 or more days. In fact, a study

conducted in Baltimore found that students missing 10 or fewer days in sixth grade had a 70% graduation rate, compared to just 13.2% for students who missed 40 or more days (Olsen, 2014).

Middle school marks a pivotal time when absenteeism tends to rise, making early identification and intervention critical. Risk indicators such as missing 20 or more days of school, failing English language arts or math, repeating a grade or experiencing suspension three or more times significantly diminish a student's likelihood of graduating with their peers (B.E.R.C., 2011). According to the Baltimore Education Research Consortium (2011), 70.8% of students who failed to graduate exhibited signs of disengagement as early as sixth grade. Improvements in instruction, teacher support and interventions for both attendance and suspension have been shown to foster higher academic achievement and improved graduation rates.

Modern practice has largely abandoned punitive measures as an effective means of addressing attendance issues. Punitive approaches often fail to consider the underlying reasons for absence, alienating students and families, and hamper efforts to build trust and a meaningful working relationship. To foster long-term improvement, interventions must be rooted in relationships and supported by follow-through (Attendance Works, 2024). Creating a strong school culture that emphasizes pastoral care, combined with a strong academic focus, can bridge the gap between students, families and the institution (Murphy & Torre, 2017).

Building strong relationships is central to motivating students and promoting behavioral success. When students are consistently recognized for their efforts and achievements — regardless of size — they are more motivated to continue making positive choices (Character Strong, 2025). Students tend to work harder when they feel valued, seen and liked (Weis, 2025). By acknowledging their efforts, especially those that occur beyond traditional academic milestones, schools can cultivate an environment where students feel supported and inspired to stay engaged. As stated by Character Strong (2025), "Recognizing and celebrating positive behavior reinforces desired actions and motivates students to continue making positive choices on any given day."

**Strategies for Improving Attendance**

Research suggest that providing incentives and focusing on relationships can be highly effective in increasing student attendance. According to Attendance Works (2014), successful incentive programs often incorporate the following elements:

- Making sure students understand that their presence is noticed and valued.
- Rewarding students for achieving weekly attendance goals and for making improvements.
- Acknowledging timeliness as a key component.
- Involving families in the process.
- Implementing school-wide incentives that foster a sense of belonging and support.

As an administrator, and with a strong understanding of what the research reveals about attendance, I felt a deep responsibility to act. I knew it was critical to build meaningful relationships with students, provide positive incentives and ensure consistent follow-through with my attendance plans. This led to the implementation of two targeted interventions – the *Coffee Club* and the *Student Incentive Intervention Plan* – both designed to foster connections and motivate students to come to school every day.

**The Coffee Club**

My second year at a middle school grades 5-8, the Coffee Club was created for middle school students in grades 7 and 8 at risk of dropping out, many of whom had prior attendance or behavioral concerns. Many of the students I had to take to court the prior year. To participate, students were required to attend school every day for a week, arrive on time and provide an excuse if absent. I would check their attendance on Friday. Those who met the criteria were invited to a Monday morning gathering in the guidance conference room before school with me and any other staff who would like to join, where we enjoyed coffee, many kinds of creamers and open conversation. This initiative gave students an opportunity to connect, laugh and build relationships with staff and peers. As one student shared, “Mrs. Wagner, this is the only reason I want to come to school – so I can come to Coffee Club.” Even after students left the school, many returned to express how much this program meant to them. In fact, I ran into one of the students at the YMCA, who was excited to see me, and said, “Mrs. Wagner, my sister and I were talking about Coffee Club the other day.” I also expanded the program to a Cocoa Club for fifth- and sixth-grade students who were on attendance plans. Unfortunately, with some years being busier than others, it was hard to manage this program every year.

**Student Incentive Intervention Plans**

This past year, I implemented an incentive program that combined regular meetings with students and meaningful incentives. We met weekly or biweekly, allowing students to review their attendance and set future goals. Students earned weekly prizes (such as selecting a duck from the “duck pond” or choosing a prize from the “grab basket”), as well as long-term incentives (such as lunch in the “Dragon’s Lair,” s’mores and ice cream parties, pancake lunches or personalized rewards). Through these regular meetings, I was able to promote accountability and strengthen my connections with students and families. I felt that in order to improve attendance, it was important to meet with students and offer positive incentives.

The results of this approach were compelling, as evidenced by the following data. (See Chart 1 below)

**Chart 1**

Effectiveness of Attendance Incentive Intervention				
Weeks with Perfect Attendance				
Student	Before SAIP (Student Attendance Improvement Plan) put in place	After Incentive Plan Intervention	After stopping intervention – showing the need for intervention and importance of relationships	Decline in attendance after stopping intervention
Student A	0%	67%	36%	31%
Student B	91%	71%	47%	24%
Student C	64%	86%	80%	6%
Student D	36%	86%	53%	33%
Student E	14%	94%	18%	76%
Student F	27%	29%	7%	22%
Student G	64%	100%	78%	22%
Student H	67%	100%	88%	12%
Student I	73%	100%	86%	14%
Student J	25%	86%	52%	34%
Student K	14%	75%	24%	51%
Student L	55%	100%	47%	53%
Student M	0%	No Intervention	3%	N/A

**The above results show percentage of weeks’ perfect attendance, arriving on time or bringing an excuse.**

Students would often ask when our next meeting would be, indicating the significance of this initiative in their lives. While my role evolved to include additional administrative responsibilities, I remained committed to supporting students in other capacities. The data shows the importance of prioritizing meetings with students, and the follow-through of attendance plans to improve attendance in an administrator’s role.

Because attendance significantly impacts both the academic and social development of all students –

whether truant or not — it is vital to invest the time and effort to build strong relationships that foster trust, belonging and improved attendance.

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*Throughout her career, she has come to deeply value the critical connection between student attendance and reading achievement and firmly believes that academic success begins with meaningful relationships.*

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# The Evolution of Bullying: Same Harm, Different Approach

By Alicia Johnson, Ed.D.



It is naïve to think that bullying does not exist within our schools and beyond, especially given the hateful rhetoric that saturates the internet and infiltrates our news outlets. While we will never eradicate bullying behavior, we *can* take steps to better understand and mitigate the “new school” version

of such an insidious phenomenon. Although physical bullying still exists, the issue is now predominantly psychological, which poses a challenge of identifying bullying in the latest iteration and then knowing when and how to intervene (Englander, 2023).

## Bullying Defined

Understanding the traits of bullying helps guide appropriate responses under district policies, disciplinary actions, prevention strategies and ensures validation for those affected. Bullying is repeated, intentional abuse directed at a target perceived as less powerful (Englander, 2023; Olweus, 1978). Recent data shows that bullying is increasingly psychological and more difficult to detect, even if children report the behavior to adults (Englander, 2023; Gaete et al., 2021). Children are scared to come to school, parents are worried, and educators are desperately trying to quell a covertly far-reaching problem.

## Gateway Behaviors

The prevalence of subtly rude and malicious behaviors, such as whispering, eye rolling, ignoring, interrupting or laughing do not necessarily look like bullying on the surface and they may not be indicative of bullying, but it is nevertheless important to pay attention to such behaviors (Englander, 2023). These “gateway behaviors” may not break any explicit rules or violate district policies, but the impact can still be devastating, especially the longer the behaviors continue. Gateway behavior often evolves into more serious cases of bullying (Englander, 2023). Playgrounds, hallways, cafeterias and classrooms are rife with such inconspicuous cruelty (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Englander, 2023) and discreet behaviors also bleed into the online world for many children. Additionally, when confronted, those who engage in gateway behaviors often describe their actions as “just joking” to justify their conduct, while the target may go along with that explanation out of concern that speaking up could make the situation worse.

Educators in every school community often face the challenge of interpreting what someone truly means when they say they were “just joking.” One helpful way to prevent misunderstandings is to have open, age-appropriate conversations with students about the distinction between playful teasing and hurtful bullying. While “roasting” can appear harmless at first glance, it can quickly cross a line — especially when there is existing tension or a power imbalance between peers, or when bystanders are unaware of how intense or frequent the behavior may be.

We also need to be careful about normalizing or perpetuating negative behavior by using gender-conditioned phrases such as “boys will be boys,” “that’s just how boys tease each other,” “you know how (teenage) girls are,” or “they’re just overly sensitive.” Instead of blaming the targets or writing them off as “too sensitive,” we need to empower them and address the bullying behavior directly. Age-normative “teasing” can easily turn into bullying, and the phrase “we were just joking” continues to frame many reported incidents in educational spaces. This framing cannot and should not absolve students of harmful actions.

## Cyberbullying

An added layer of the harm of bullying is that it can now happen at any time of the day, versus stopping at the end of the school day before the introduction and access to electronic devices. Children are increasingly



vulnerable to abuse, particularly online where adult supervision is often lacking. Li et al. (2022) conducted a study that revealed that victims of cyberbullying have higher rates of psychological trauma than those of traditional bullying. Students cite several reasons for not reporting cyberbullying, including concerns that reporting may worsen the situation, doubts about the lack of adult intervention or fear that their families will restrict their device use or require them to block the relevant platform.

The increase in cyberbullying isn't that shocking as the aggressor can easily cloak his or her identity using anonymous accounts and pseudonyms. Cyberbullying has the capacity to go viral quickly, so the number of targets, witnesses and perpetrators is endless, and it can be difficult to locate the source. Also, it's easier to be cruel using technology because cyberbullying from a physically distant location ensures the aggressor doesn't see the target's response. Although parents and teachers are improving their supervision at school and home, most adults lack the technical skills or time to monitor teens' online activities (Englander, 2023).

### Identity-based Bullying

According to a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2021, certain groups of children are more often victims than others. Children who receive special education, children of color and children who identify as LGBTQIA+ are more likely targets of bullying (Englander, 2023; Clayton et al., 2023). Some examples of identity-based bullying include the repeated mocking or degradation of a child with a disability, racial or ethnic slurs or comments, homophobic language or actions, ethnic intimidation, exclusion because of religious beliefs or physical assault related to bias (Alvis et al., 2023). Microaggressions related to gender identifiers, including "slut" shaming females (Ringrose et al., 2024) or belittling a male student for crying or showing vulnerability are also unfortunate examples of biased-based bullying. We have also seen an increase of bullying behaviors aimed toward our children of immigrant or refugee families, which only compounds the fear that exists among already vulnerable communities (Ianello et al., 2023).

We also aim to create a safe environment for English Language Learners to report incidents, sometimes with the use of interpreters, but the language barriers create another obstacle and interfere with the development of language proficiency (Rochma, 2024). Again, although most school districts are explicit and transparent about the laws and policies related to bullying, discrimination or harassment, we can't assume that children (or adults) feel safe enough to report such egregious situations.

### Rage Baiting IRL

Rage baiting is intentionally inflammatory online content such as posts on social media platforms designed specifically to trigger anger and outrage. Although rage baiting is a phrase typically used to describe online interactions, we have seen an increase in real life as well. Online users or "bots" target another person by name-calling, incendiary comments or antagonistic content to lure the person to react out of anger, which is usually the outcome (Gabor, 2023). This behavior is problematic and adds another layer of harm when the targets are already vulnerable or inept at navigating social situations. Most children aren't aware of the bait and lack the critical thinking skills or support system to resolve such a convoluted issue. They need explicit guidance, and adults can help.

### What We Can Do as School Leaders

The best defense is empowering (potential) targets (Englander, 2023) by making sure all children feel a sense of belonging in the learning community and connected to the content. We can socially engineer play-based activities at all levels to help with the navigation and complexities of childhood and adolescence (Milteer et al., 2012).

- Encourage faculty and staff to pay attention to power dynamics at play and to any "gateway behaviors" that fly under the radar.
- Ensure bullying is prohibited as per publicly displayed board policies and state and federal laws. Make sure all constituents are aware of **Pennsylvania Department of Education Bullying Resources**.



- Ensure kids have a trusted adult for support if bullied, post resources in private areas so children can access ways to anonymously report incidents or concerns and advertise district-specific supports and the **PA Safe2Say resource**.



- Encourage families and grown-ups to monitor social media for their children and to set limits. Share local resources and host events for families to engage in discourse around bullying and **digital citizenship**.



- Consult the nurse and school counselors about children who might be expressing physiological symptoms such as a headache or stomachache to observe any patterns and swiftly address concerns when/if a child or a family reports them.

While the field of education is evolving, along with the challenges and obstacles we face as educators, our role as advocates to protect and support children

remains the same. Not only do we have a responsibility to advance their knowledge and understanding of academic content, but we must also commit to making sure we guide children to make healthy decisions for themselves and those around them.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Johnson at [aliciajohnson026@gmail.com](mailto:aliciajohnson026@gmail.com). ■

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Alicia Johnson, Ed.D., is an Assistant Principal at J.E. Harrison Middle School in the Baldwin-Whitehall School District. She has served in the education field in various roles for the past 20 years and will serve her eighth year as an assistant principal at J.E. Harrison Middle School, where she is grateful to support adolescents as they navigate the complex social world and explore who they are and who they want to become.*

*Dr. Johnson’s love of children started when she interned at Walt Disney World and continued as she worked as a camp counselor, dance and theatre teacher, mental health clinician and school counselor. In addition, she believes strongly in the need for children to express their emotions and gain insight as they make meaning of the world around them.*

# Welcome NEW Secondary Members

7/1/2025 - 9/30/2025

## NAME

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Michelle Allen  
Jessica Babbitt  
Dr. Edward Benning  
Ann Bisignani  
Kristen Blackburn  
Timothy Bonitz  
Stephen Boyce  
Julie Bravin  
Heather Brown  
Dr. Kyle Brun  
Joshua Burkhart  
Bradley Catherman  
Jake Cawley  
Katrina Chapman  
Jessica Cole  
John Conran  
Brande Conway  
Stacey Cornelius  
Asia Davis  
Andrew DeAntonio  
Betsy D'Emidio  
Aaron Domanski  
Amy Dombrowski  
Andrew Dornes  
Dr. Andrew Dua  
Katrina Durrwachter  
Jennifer Dysinger  
John Ewerth  
Rachel Faust  
Gina Felter  
Dr. Shaina Franson  
Wesley French  
Blake Fritz  
Christin George  
Matthew Gombita  
Laura Goodnack  
Amy Grab  
Elizabeth Graham  
Berchman Grinage  
Crystal Grossman  
James Hale  
Melissa Haney  
Kenneth Herr  
Justin Hetrick  
Jamie Hill  
Brennan Hoffer  
Adrienne Howe  
Dr. Lorrie Hrycek  
Alanna Huck  
Jesse Husted  
Ryan Jones  
Christopher Kasian  
Daniel Keefer  
Stacey Knerr  
Nicholas LaBella  
Dr. Allison Lakari  
Tyler Laudeman

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Greater Latrobe SD  
South Fayette Township SD  
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Southern York County SD  
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Fort Cherry SD  
Methacton SD  
North Star SD  
Somerset Area SD  
Sto-Rox SD  
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McKeesport Area SD  
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Tara Luckenbaugh  
Donald MacFann  
Tara Maruca  
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Jordan McGregor  
Emma Melhorn  
Stephen Melnyk  
Jim Miller  
Jason Mills  
Jenna Mozzocio  
Casey Newcomer  
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Iroquois SD

## NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Cale Hilbolt



*"I joined the PA Principals Association to broaden my network and continue learning new ways to support students and colleagues. It is important to stay connected and continue growing professionally."*

Cale Hilbolt is the Director of Student Services for Octorara Area School District. In his career, he has served in roles that specialize in supporting students with exceptionalities and is always looking for new ways to create pathways to success for students. ■

***The PA Principals Association has  
an Approved Act 45 Program for  
Your Administrative Team!***

# **Improving Leadership and Student Learning Through Simulations**

***Earn 30 Act 45 Hours!***

## **We Will Bring the Program to Your District!**

**Who:** Any school leader who needs Act 45 hours or your entire administrative team.

**Where:** Program is delivered by PA Principals Association staff and is held in your district.

**When:** You select a full day that is convenient to both your team and the PA Principals Association.

**Cost:** \$300 per individual with a minimum of 10 participants. (You can coordinate with a neighboring school district, too!)

### **Program Purpose:**

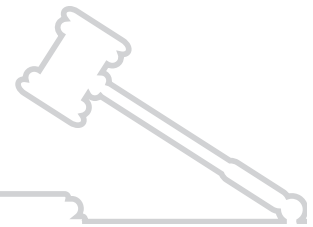
**Through the use of simulations, participants will sharpen their leadership skills of decision-making using real-life applications.**

### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Participants will know and understand that their everyday decisions have an effect on others.
- ✓ Participants will know and understand that the decisions we make are largely based on our past experiences.
- ✓ Participants will learn that simulations provide an opportunity for school leaders to make decisions and to play out those decisions in a safe environment.
- ✓ The use of simulations will help school leaders hone their people skills.
- ✓ The use of simulations will help school leaders practice “tough conversations.”

**For more information or to schedule a workshop in your district, contact Dr. Beth Haldeman at (717) 732-4999 or [haldeman@paprincipals.org](mailto:haldeman@paprincipals.org).**





## LEGAL CORNER

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

# Conducting Effective Investigations of Student and Employee Wrongdoing: A Comprehensive Guide for School Principals Part II

**Editor's Note:** Due to the length of this article, it was split into two parts. Part I was in the last edition of this magazine and addressed such topics as the legal framework for investigations, the role of the principal, relevant laws, sexual harassment, the immediate response to reports, planning the investigation and conducting interviews.



### **Conducting the Interview, Continued** **Audio Recording**

With the advancements of technology, audio recording is easy and reliable. However, if a principal is going to record the interview, all persons must be notified in advance. It may be a crime to secretly record

conversations in Pennsylvania. If the principal is going to record an investigative interview, the following procedures must be observed:

#### **Obtain approval from the superintendent or designee.**

Because of the legal risks of recording conversations and the often-unclear court rulings under the Wiretap Act, it is strongly recommended that principals do not record investigative interviews unless the superintendent or his/her designee approves the recording. In addition, because a key legal concept in this area is whether the interviewee has a "reasonable expectation of privacy," the younger the child, the less likely they are to understand the notices discussed below. I would recommend not recording interviews of elementary and, perhaps, middle school students without obtaining their parents' prior consent.

#### **Give notice before recording begins.**

Do not start recording until you have provided appropriate notice of the fact that the interview is being recorded and the uses for the recording. Notice may be couched as follows:

*Before we begin, I want to inform you that this interview will be audio recorded. This is to ensure there is an accurate and complete record of what is said. Please be advised that there should be no expectation that what you say will remain private. It is possible that the recording may be shared with others involved in the investigation, including school administrators, legal counsel, or outside agencies, if necessary, and may be used in connection with disciplinary decisions, reports to authorities or legal proceedings. I am providing this notice so that you are fully aware that your statements are being recorded and that they may be used or disclosed in connection with this matter. Do you understand this notice?*

#### **Record the acknowledgment.**

After stating the notice above, the principal should begin recording and ask the interviewee again on tape:

*Today is [insert date]. My name is [Principal's Name], and I am conducting an investigative interview with [Interviewee's Name] at [School Name]. For the record, I want to repeat what I told you before I started recording. Specifically, I informed you that before we began, I wanted to let you know that this interview will be audio recorded. This is to ensure there is an accurate and complete record of what is said. Please be advised that there should be no expectation that what you say will remain private. It is possible that the recording may be shared with others involved in the investigation, including school administrators, legal counsel or outside agencies, if necessary, and may be used in connection*

*with disciplinary decisions, reports to authorities or legal proceedings. I am providing this notice so that you are fully aware that your statements are being recorded and that they may be used or disclosed to others in connection with this matter. Do you understand this notice?*

*Please confirm that I provided you with those instructions.*

*Please confirm that you understand this interview is being recorded and may be shared with others.*

### **Document the notice and understanding in writing if feasible.**

If feasible, you may want to have a written acknowledgment form at the investigative hearing to document further that notice was given. **[Form 7.1]**

### **Prepare a verbatim transcript.**

When the interview is over, a transcript of the recording should be prepared. Both the recording and the transcript must be preserved. The transcript should be signed by the typist and by the principal certifying its accuracy. **[Form 8]**

### **Video Recording**

Less common would be to use video recording, but this technique may be appropriate in cases involving serious misconduct or safety concerns. The same rules that apply to audio recordings apply to video recordings. **[Form 9]**

### **Signed Witness Statements**

It is common, particularly in student matters, for principals to have students write statements about what they saw and/or heard. Such statements may be written in the first person by the witness or dictated to the principal and then reviewed. The witness should review the statement for accuracy, sign and date the statement and initial any corrections or edits. **[Form 10]**

### **Email Confirmations**

If an interviewee provides information or clarification after the interview via email, these communications should be printed or saved as part of the record and stored in the case file.

### **Interview Attendance Logs**

An interview attendance

log set forth in a separate document should be kept, recording who was interviewed, by whom, on what date, location of interview and duration of interview with start and end times. **[Form 11]**

### **Best Practices for All Documentation**

When documenting interviews, maintain objectivity — do not include personal opinions or assumptions. Distinguish clearly between direct quotes and paraphrasing. Secure all records in a confidential location (either digital or physical) that is consistent with school district requirements.

### **Gathering and Preserving Evidence**

#### **Documentary evidence.**

When conducting an investigation, principals must ensure that all relevant documentation is gathered, including, but not limited to, emails, text messages, social media posts, reports, disciplinary records and any other written materials related to the situation. Additionally, it is crucial to properly preserve any physical evidence, such as clothing or objects relevant to the investigation.

#### **Video surveillance.**

Principals must review any available security camera footage that may be relevant to the incident. Principals need to preserve and securely store the relevant footage to ensure it is not lost, altered or deleted, as it may serve as important evidence. **[Form 12]**

#### **Searches and privacy limits.**

When conducting searches as part of the investigatory process involving students or employees, principals must ensure that the search is justified at its inception and reasonable in scope and complies in all instances with school district requirements and applicable law. For students, this means there must be reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school board policy. Under the Fourth Amendment, students have privacy rights at school, but those rights are balanced against the school's interest in maintaining a safe learning environment. Searches should not be overly invasive unless clearly justified, and care should be taken to prevent unnecessary intrusion.



In some situations, searching a student's locker or backpack may be appropriate. However, more invasive searches, such as those involving a student's person, must not be conducted unless there is clear legal authority and the search fully complies with school board policies.

For employees, their privacy rights under the Fourth Amendment must also be respected. Searches of employees, their workplaces and/or their belongings should comply with applicable laws, school board policy and collective bargaining agreements. A search may be justified if there is reasonable suspicion and the search is limited in scope to what is necessary. Generally, the suspected employee should be approached in a non-confrontational manner, and their permission should be requested before conducting the search. Unless there is a substantial reason not to, the search should be conducted in the presence of the employee and a witness, preferably an administrator, not a co-worker, to maintain confidentiality and avoid creating conflict among staff.

Drug testing of employees is considered a search under the Fourth Amendment. It may be conducted when there is individualized suspicion or where the government's interest in justifying the testing is substantial. However, there is some legal uncertainty about whether random drug testing is allowed. While some courts have suggested that random drug testing is valid, at least one court has indicated that there must be at least a generalized suspicion before drug testing can be imposed. Other courts have essentially required individualized suspicion. In contrast, some courts have ruled that whether drug testing is appropriate should be decided in the context of a governing collective bargaining agreement. In *Metz v. Bethlehem Area Sch. Dist.*, 177 A.3d 384 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2018), the Commonwealth Court held that school districts do not need a warrant to conduct a drug test on a teacher as long as the test is reasonable under the Fourth Amendment.

Where applicable, procedures should align with established federal guidelines and applicable laws to ensure due process. Chain-of-custody protocols should

be followed to protect the integrity of the test results and preserved for independent testing by or on behalf of the employee.

It is essential not to use the results of drug testing inappropriately. For example, while urinalysis tests can detect the presence of drugs, they typically do not indicate whether a person is currently under the influence of drugs. As a result, some courts have ruled that relying solely on urinalysis test results to impose serious disciplinary action on employees can violate due process rights.

#### **Prohibited techniques.**

Lie detector tests and psychological stress evaluators should rarely, if ever, be used by school districts in investigations, as these devices are generally not considered sufficiently reliable, making their effectiveness questionable and their results

inadmissible as evidence. Employers may not require employees to take a lie detector test as a condition of employment or continued employment. Similarly, devices that measure voice stress or tonal inflections may not be used without the consent of the person whose statement is being tested. While employees may voluntarily agree to a test, any consent should

be clearly documented in writing.

Additionally, principals should never threaten or coerce a student or employee into cooperating with an investigation, nor should they promise immunity from consequences in exchange for testimony or participation. Such practices are not only unethical but can also compromise the integrity and legality of the investigative process.

#### **Investigation report.**

At the conclusion of the investigation, principals should prepare a summary report that outlines the key components of the process. The report should include a summary of the allegations, names and roles of those involved, a brief summary of each interview and a list and analysis of the evidence collected. It should also state the findings of fact, conclude whether a policy violation occurred, and, if appropriate, include recommendations such as referral for disciplinary action. **[Form 13]**

“ At the conclusion of the investigation, principals should prepare a summary report that outlines the key components of the process. ”

## **Confidentiality and Retaliation Protections**

### **Confidentiality requirements.**

Information related to the investigation should be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to know. All participants must be instructed to keep the matter confidential and refrain from discussing the investigation with others except as allowed or required otherwise by law.

### **Retaliation prohibition.**

Principals should clearly inform all parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited. Principals must also actively monitor for any signs of retaliation throughout and after the investigation process.

### **Script.**

Before the investigative interview ends, the following kind of information should be provided to the interviewee.

*Before we conclude, I want to address two important issues: confidentiality and retaliation. First, this interview is part of a school investigation. You are expected to keep what is discussed here confidential unless law permits or requires otherwise. This means you should not talk about this interview or its subject matter with anyone else, unless you are seeking legal advice, speaking with a parent or guardian if you are a student or as specified by law. Staying confidential helps protect the integrity of the process and everyone's privacy. Second, I want to be very clear that retaliation is strictly forbidden. No one is allowed to intimidate, threaten, harass or take any negative action against someone because they reported a concern, participated in the investigation or were involved in this process. This includes negative treatment, social exclusion, threats or other forms of retaliation. While we don't expect anyone to retaliate against you, if you believe you are being retaliated against or if someone asks you to retaliate against another person, you should report it right away. The school takes this seriously and will respond appropriately. Do you understand what I've just said about confidentiality and retaliation?*

### **Communicating results.**

Principals must consider whether they should provide a summary of the investigation findings to either the complainant or the respondent, subject to school board policy and confidentiality requirements. In student discipline cases, parents may have a right to be informed.

### **Tips and Common Pitfalls to Avoid**

#### **Tips for effective investigations.**

Principals should act promptly when handling investigations, as delays can compromise the integrity of evidence. It is essential to remain impartial, follow

all school district policies and legal requirements and treat all allegations seriously. Using a checklist can help ensure that no steps are overlooked. **[Form 14]**

#### **Pitfalls to avoid.**

Common mistakes in investigations include failing to document key steps and disregarding minor complaints that may indicate a pattern. Making prejudicial comments or discussing the case with staff who are not involved can compromise the process. Ensuring all evidence is carefully preserved and properly managed is essential to maintaining the credibility and integrity of the investigation process.

### **Coordination with Law Enforcement or Other Agencies**

#### **Mandatory reporting.**

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse, principals must promptly report the suspected abuse through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Child Welfare Portal or by calling ChildLine. Additionally, if the suspected conduct falls under an incident reportable under the Safe Schools Act, the superintendent or designee must notify local law enforcement in accordance with applicable law.

#### **Parallel investigations.**

When law enforcement is involved, principals should coordinate with them but not delay necessary administrative actions. Additionally, principals should avoid interfering with police investigations.

#### **Conclusion**

Effective investigations are essential to maintaining school safety, integrity and legal compliance. Principals must approach investigations with professionalism, impartiality and a commitment to due process. By following the steps outlined in this article and adhering to school district procedures and applicable law, principals can ensure that investigations are conducted fairly and produce reliable outcomes.

Please **scan the QR code below** to access the **investigation forms** referenced in the article. Refer to the disclaimer and instructions regarding the use of these forms on the following page. ■



## Disclaimer and Instructions Regarding Use of Investigation Forms

### Disclaimer:

The forms and materials provided in this article are for **informational and educational purposes only**. They are intended to serve as general templates to assist school entities and their administrators in documenting and conducting employee or student investigations. **They do not constitute legal advice** and may not reflect the requirements of all applicable federal, state or local laws, regulations or board policies. Users of these forms are solely responsible for ensuring that they are adapted to fit the facts, circumstances and legal requirements of their particular situation.

### Administrative Approval:

Before initiating or using any form or investigative step outlined herein, **principals and other building-level administrators must seek prior review and approval** from the appropriate central office administrator, such as the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources Director or other designated official. Investigations often involve sensitive legal, contractual and personnel considerations that require oversight and coordination at the district level.

### Instructions for Use:

1. **Review Board Policies and Procedures:** Confirm that the investigative steps align with the school entity's adopted policies, collective bargaining agreements and administrative regulations.
2. **Secure Authorization:** Obtain approval or direction from the appropriate central office administrator **before** beginning interviews, collecting documents or issuing notices.

### Adapt as Needed:

Modify forms to ensure compliance with applicable laws (e.g., Title IX, Section 504/ADA, state mandatory reporting laws) and to reflect the unique facts of the matter.

1. **Maintain Confidentiality:** All documents and information generated during an investigation should be treated as confidential and shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to know.
2. **Seek Legal Counsel When Appropriate:** Complex matters, such as those involving potential termination, litigation risk, discrimination claims or law enforcement involvement, may require consultation with the school entity's solicitor or legal counsel.

**Important:** Failure to follow appropriate chain-of-command or procedural requirements may result in the investigation being compromised or subject to challenge.

## PA Principals Association is Offering New EdCamp Across PA

### Transforming Student and Teacher Learning through EdCamps and Effective Professional Development

Qualifies for 40 Act 45 Hours! 40-Participant Minimum to Hold EdCamp

#### Schedule:

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. - **Orientation** (for those attending for Act 45 hours)

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - **EdCamp**

#### Cost:

**\$99** for Act 45 hours (discounted from standard Act 45 course cost); **FREE**, if attending for experience only.

#### Presenters:

**Primary Facilitator/Act 45 Coursework Coordinator:** Dr. Beth Haldeman

**Co-Facilitators may include PA Principals Association Staff and Board Members.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** EdCamp can be offered virtually. If you wish to hold it in your district, this is an option. In addition, this new EdCamp would be perfect for a Saturday, after school hours, a day off school or summer inservice.

**For program requirements or to schedule an EdCamp in your district, please contact Dr. Beth Haldeman at [haldeman@paprincipals.org](mailto:haldeman@paprincipals.org)**



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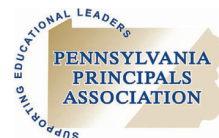


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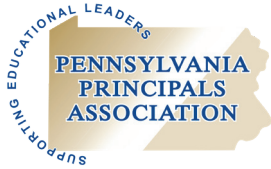
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STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE  
STUDENT LEARNING**

**30 Act 45 Hours**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

**The program will focus on the following:**

- ✓ Act 13 (*Educator Effectiveness*)
- ✓ Having Tough Conversations
- ✓ Developing a Supervisory Platform
- ✓ Case Studies

***We will customize the program components  
to fit your district's needs!***

**IMPORTANT...Even Though You Have Already  
Taken This Course, You May Do So Again!**

**THE STRUCTURED STUDY  
OF STUDENT WORK**

**30 Act 45 Hours**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

*Using protocols, participants will examine  
student work and student data in a collaborative,  
professional development session.*

### **KEY CONCEPTS**

- ✓ Participants will collaboratively discuss what is student work and what are qualities of great student work.
- ✓ Participants will learn facilitation skills that promote participation, ensure equity and build trust.
- ✓ Participants will engage in four protocols, plan for implementation in their school/district and be provided protocol outlines, graphic organizers and other materials for their use.



**The cost for each workshop is \$300 per individual with a minimum of 15 participants.  
You can coordinate with a neighboring district, too.**

**For more information or to schedule a workshop in your district, contact Dr. Beth Haldeman,  
PA Principals Director of Professional Development, at (717) 732-4999 or [haldeman@papincipals.org](mailto:haldeman@papincipals.org)**