More Than a Power Lunch: Building Networks to Support and Advance Women in School Leadership Initiative

Lessons Learned and Recommended Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

May 31, 2017
2:00pm – 3:00pm ET
Welcome!

Thank you for joining us for today’s webinar.

HOST: Vera Turner
Project Manager, AASA Women In School Leadership Initiative
Logistics

- Access the audio for today’s webinar either via your computer or phone.

1. Call in to the event: 1-650-479-3208
2. Enter the access code: 661 776 060
3. Enter your Attendee ID: #
Webinar Participation

• We have allotted time for **Q&A**, but you can submit questions at any time.

• Please use the **chat window** to submit questions. In the dropdown menu, select “**All Participants**” and then type your question in the chat box.
Agenda:

- Overview of Initiative
- Major Challenges of Aspiring Women Leaders
- Strategies for Overcoming Barriers
- Panel Discussion and Q & A
Presenters

PANELISTS:

- Amy Sichel, Superintendent, Abington School District (PA)
- Tamu Lucero, Assistant Superintendent, Stamford Public School District (CT)
- Jacinda Conboy, General Counsel, The New York State Council of School Superintendents

MODERATOR:

- Patricia Neudecker, Director of Administrative Leadership, Assistant Professor, Alverno College
MODERATOR

Patricia Neudecker,
Director of Administrative Leadership
and Assistant Professor
Alverno College
Overview of Initiative

Two-Year Grant Initiative Designed to:

• Mitigate the impact of social barriers women face in ascending to the top leadership positions within our school systems

• Increase the number of women seeking and becoming CEOs and superintendents of schools.

Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Overview of Initiative

Multi-faceted Approach:

- AASA National Women’s Leadership Consortium
- Mentoring for 20 Aspiring Women Leaders
- Connecting Learnings to Practice
- Enhanced Professional Learning Opportunities
- Networking Opportunities
- Women in School Leadership Awards
- National Awareness Campaign

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Major Challenges

• Pathways to the Superintendency
• Work-Life Balance
• Boards/Political Dynamics
• Networking and Mentoring
• Search Consultants
Polling Question
Amy Sichel, Superintendent
Abington School District (PA)
Pathways to the Superintendency

What is the skill set required for this position and do I possess those skills?

- How do I even learn the crucial components of the position of Superintendent?
- How do I become more qualified and gain these experiences?
Pathways to the Superintendency

What are the educational experiences required for the position of Superintendent?

• Do I need to have been a principal?
• Do I need to have been a member of central staff or the Superintendent’s cabinet?
• Do I need to have experiences at all grade levels i.e. elementary and secondary?
Pathways to the Superintendency

What information can I learn about the district(s) to which I want to pursue and apply?

• Is this district looking to promote internally or externally, i.e. is there a long-term Assistant Superintendent(s) already within the district?

• Given what I know about the district, how do I navigate the system
Pathways to the Superintendency

Strategies

• Do your homework and do the research
• Obtain the appropriate state required certifications
• Pursue higher education and a doctoral degree
• Evaluate whether an employment opportunity is the right one for you
• Be selective about where you aspire to work
• Everyone has a unique set of circumstances that determine your personal decision making
Tamu Lucero
Assistant Superintendent
Stamford Public School District (CT)
Work- Life Balance

Top Three...
Prioritizing between “Work” and “Life”
Realistic Expectations
Wellness
Family First
Self-Reflection
Amy Sichel, Superintendent
Abington School District (PA)
Considerations re: School Boards

Check out the interests of the Board to which you seek employment

• What are the values and beliefs of the Board?
• Has there been a female Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent?
• What is the make-up of the present Board and remember it often changes every 2 to 3 years?
• As an aspiring woman do you lack experience working with Boards?
Strategies re: School Boards

How can you gain experience and knowledge regarding working with Boards and Board Governance?

• Seek opportunities to obtain this experience through professional development

• Utilize programs available through AASA and your state organization as well as through NSBA and the state affiliates

• Network

• Seek input from mentors
Jacinda Conboy, General Counsel
The New York State Council of School Superintendents
Networking & Mentoring

Challenges:
Women will often prioritize work over networking and do not value or see networking as significant to their career advancement. Women also struggle in developing networks for support.

Strategies:
• Make networking a priority.
• Look to associations for support and connections.
• Consider non-traditional ways of networking.
MODERATOR

Patricia Neudecker,
Director of Administrative Leadership
and Assistant Professor
Alverno College
Search Consultants

Challenges:
• Applications from males still outnumber applications from females
• Districts technically cannot discriminate but biases may exist
• Candidates often come from secondary principal roles, more frequently held by men
• Negative stereotypes are still pervasive
• Female candidates may face scrutiny males may not
• Some women simply “just don’t want the position”
• Impressions of past success has often been shaped by male role models
Search Consultants

Strategies:

• Boards need to be encouraged to seek a diverse pool (gender and ethnicity)
• Talent needs to be nurtured, mentored and encouraged
• Individuals seeking higher level positions need to self-promote while in their current position
• School districts need to do long term planning for leadership development
• Search consultants can ensure candidates get a fair look
• Successful superintendents need to mentor and support other high quality candidates
• Network….network….network!
Q & A

Ask Questions. Share your experiences and lessons learned.
Resources

Contact Information:

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Additional Resources:

AASA, The School Superintendents Association

#WomenLeadingEdu
AASA.org/WomenInSchoolLeadership.aspx
Thank you for your participation!