

AASA JOURNAL OF SCHOLARSHIP & PRACTICE



Research and Evidence-Based Practice Advancing the Profession of Education Administration

Summer 2023, Volume 20 No. 2

Table of Contents

Board of Editors	2
Sponsorship and Appreciation	3
Editorial	
Boundaries, Boards, and Battles	4
<i>by Ken Mitchell, EdD</i>	
Research Article	
School Board Members' Beliefs About State Education Policymaking and Policymakers.	7
<i>by Nancy Watkins, EdD; Allan Mucerino, EdD; Dawn Person, PhD</i>	
Commentary	
The Praying Football Coach Supreme Court Decision: Five Implications for School Administrators	21
<i>by Michael Shaffer, EdD; Janet Decker, JD, PhD; Jennifer Rippner JD, PhD</i>	
Research Article	
Grow Your Own Programs: An Opportunity for Universities and School Districts to Collaborate and Reshape Principal Preparation.	30
<i>by Lisa Allen, EdD; Joseph Wallace, DSL; Franklin Thomas, EdD</i>	
Research Article	
PreK-12 Is the New Reality: How Do We Make It Work?	38
<i>by Deborah Stipek, PhD and Cynthia Coburn, PhD</i>	
Mission and Scope, Copyright, Privacy, Ethics, Upcoming Themes, Author Guidelines & Publication Timeline,	48
AASA Resources and Events, Updated	52

Editorial Review Board

AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice
2023-2024

Editor

Kenneth Mitchell, *Manhattanville College*

Associate Editor

Barbara Dean, *AASA, The School Superintendents Association*

Editorial Review Board

Jessica Anspach, *Montclair State University*

Brandon Beck, *Ossining Public Schools*

Gina Cinotti, *Netcong Public Schools, New Jersey*

Michael Cohen, *Denver Public Schools*

Betty Cox, *University of Tennessee, Martin*

Vance Dalzin, *Carthage College, Kenosha, WI*

Mary Lynne Derrington, *University of Tennessee*

Ryan Fisk, *East Rockaway Public Schools, NY*

Denver J. Fowler, *Southern Connecticut State University*

Daniel Gutmore, *Seton Hall University*

Gregory Hauser, *Roosevelt University, Chicago*

Steve Herson, *St. John's University*

Zach Kelehear, *Augusta University, GA*

Kevin Majewski, *Seton Hall University*

Joanne Marien, *Manhattanville College*

Nelson Maylone, *Eastern Michigan University*

Robert S. McCord, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Emeritus*

Barbara McKeon, *Broome Street Academy Charter High School, New York, NY*

Margaret "Terry" Orr, *Fordham University*

Brian Osborne, *Lehigh University*

David J. Parks, *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

Joseph Phillips, *Manhattanville College*

Joseph Ricca, *White Plains City School District*

Thomas C. Valesky, *Florida Gulf Coast University, Emeritus*

Charles Wheaton, *Leadership Services, Granger, WA*

Available at www.aasa.org/jsp.aspx

ISSN 1931-6569

Sponsorship and Appreciation

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* would like to thank AASA, The School Superintendents Association, and in particular AASA's Leadership Development, for its ongoing sponsorship of the *Journal*.

We also offer special thanks to Kenneth Mitchell, Manhattanville College, for his efforts in selecting the articles that comprise this professional education journal and lending sound editorial comments to each volume.

The unique relationship between research and practice is appreciated, recognizing the mutual benefit to those educators who conduct the research and seek out evidence-based practice and those educators whose responsibility it is to carry out the mission of school districts in the education of children.

Without the support of AASA and Kenneth Mitchell, the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* would not be possible.



Published by
AASA, The School Superintendents Association
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Boundaries, Boards, and Battles

Ken Mitchell, EdD
Editor
AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice
Summer 2023

We are in a moment of opportunity. The struggle over who controls the future of America's public schools may come down to a matter of trust.

Ken Mitchell

Perhaps unlike any moment in the history of American public education, superintendents have been drawn into a culture war whose battleground has included local school districts. Already contending with the challenges of leading a complex organization, district leaders are now expected to balance this work within a volatile political environment and an urgency to prepare a future citizenry to deal with unprecedented megatrends, such as the acceleration of artificial intelligence with its unknown capabilities and consequences.

Today's students—tomorrow's adults—must be prepared for shifting environmental, geo-political, and economic challenges that will require an evidence-based understanding of the issues and their root causes. To survive and thrive they will need to use an empirical problem-solving process. Our future citizens will also need to understand historical abuses of power to guard against emerging forms of authoritarianism that today threaten democracy across the globe.

Superintendents cannot lead this important work alone. They need strong teams to support them and school boards that understand and agree to the greater mission with policies to achieve the community's vision for students. Well-crafted visions call for outcomes beyond career or college readiness. Students must graduate with an education that prepares them to adapt to and contend with both the imminent and inevitable complexities of unknown futures. Such vision statements, if used as touchstones for decision-making, have the potential to move their use beyond symbolism.

Yet, today's public schools are serving as accessible battlegrounds in the nation's culture wars. Wars are about boundaries—the expansion or protection of them through confrontation. International conflicts in such places as the Ukraine, Sudan, Palestine, and Syria, are sparked by sectarian animosity and violence, economic inequities, and the consolidation and control of wealth by those in

power. Antagonists understand how to accelerate fear and create confusion to harden boundaries of culture, values, and ideas to separate and control.

Today's superintendents, school boards, principals, and teachers, amid their mission to prepare students for their complex life journeys, face similar tactics. The school has served as one of the remaining entities where parents from all backgrounds and with diverse viewpoints have come together to agree about what is best for what we value the most—our children. While agreement on everything is unrealistic, stakeholders have found a way to bridge differences. But as certain actors work to divide and create “cultural” boundaries, Americans risk losing a common space that has served to unite, not divide.

We are in a moment of confusion as well as conflict. With sides forming and sometimes re-forming, school leaders are seeking ways to better understand and help explain to others the arguments for the boundaries that divide on such topics as equity, diversity, race, gender, inclusion, sex education, climate change, vaccines, weapons in schools, prayer, privatization, textbooks, library collections, and so much more. What some deem as offensive, others argue are essential.

There are no blueprints for solutions, yet there are benefits to possessing clarity about such boundaries and applying that to leading. Harvard's Public Education Leadership Program offers a coherence framework with levels of influence, interference, or support from the external environment to local strategies developed by teachers and school leaders via the “instructional core”—the triad of teacher-student-content.

The framework's architects suggest boundaries, formal and informal, that are systemically integral with a value that contributes to student success. Yet, within the framework there are implicit leadership responsibilities to protect the core from that which disrupts or distracts educators from achieving the institutional vision for the learner through finding ways to use boundaries in a constructive rather than divisive way.

Boundaries serve multiple purposes with different forms. They can protect or divide. Robert Frost, in his poem “Mending Wall,” asks if the wall serves to ensure neighborly relationships or separate for protection or a self-imposed alienation. Boundaries can be paradoxical—they can help or cause harm. While most boundaries are artificial, illusory, and temporary, not all are bad. Within the debate over where lines should be drawn, leaders can find opportunity.

The Summer 2023 issue of the *JSP* explores the concept of boundary in different educational contexts: a study of school board member's beliefs about state policymaking; a collaborative project between university and public schools for developing principals; the influence of pre-K policy on teachers in the classroom; and the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision on prayer in schools and how it changes and does not change leadership's obligation to protect the rights of students.

Researchers Watkins, Mucerino, and Person in their study, “School Board Members' Beliefs about State Education Policymaking and Policymakers,” examine the challenges facing school board members, many of whom lack experience in understanding the ramifications of their decision-making for aligning local policy with those generated by

federal and state agencies. The researchers describe a decision-making model driven by value preferences at a time when boards and superintendent are dealing with increasingly complex issues such as enrollment declines, inflation, the parental rights movement, and pandemic-related matters. While they have the authority to interpret and develop local policy, the authors ask how are they operating with empiricism?’

Authors Allen, Wallace, and Thomas, in their study, “Grow Your Own Programs: An Opportunity for Universities and School Districts to Collaborate and Reshape Principal Preparation,” propose a model that breaks down barriers between P-12 and post-secondary institutions to integrate theory and practice through expertise and resources to provide a rich and authentic experience.

In their study, “PreK-12 Is the New Reality: How Do We Make it Work?” Stipek and Coburn examine the void between stated policy and that which is happening in the classroom:

While the interactions between teachers and students within the classroom are what matter most, these are affected by myriad school and district policies and practices. Researchers have identified five elements that district leaders need to consider in their efforts to support effective instruction (Hopkins & Spillane, 2015; Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015).

The researchers call for a review and alignment of practices and policies to achieve effectiveness and continuity. They describe an interaction among policies and practices that

forms a necessary package for the delivery of quality instruction.

Shaffer, Decker, and Rippner, in “The Praying Football Coach Supreme Court Decision: Five Implications for School Administrators,” analyze the constitutional tensions over religious expression in public schools when the Free Exercise Clause conflicts with the Establishment Clause and prior judicial decisions. The authors provide school leaders with background on this important case, including an examination of constitutional paradox, to better understand the limits of the boundaries and offer suggestions for managing events *when* the superintendent is called to decide about such a conflict.

Conclusion

Today’s superintendents and their teams lead in a highly contentious political environment. Survival and success might be better achieved through a deeper understanding of the paradoxes within the conflict and the boundaries that divide.

Understanding that divisions can be an unintended consequence of the ambiguity that paradox can create or from the apathy of a disengaged public is essential. Moreover, school leaders must possess an awareness that many divisions derive from intentional tactics to seize control of public school decision-making to achieve ideological agendas.

School leaders, their teams, and boards must critically examine their beliefs, consider diverse perspectives, and navigate the complex boundaries and challenges they face in education governance and policymaking, especially if they have an agreement around a well- designed mission and well-informed vision for all their students our future citizens.

School Board Members' Beliefs About State Education Policymaking and Policymakers

Nancy Watkins, EdD
Assistant Professor
Educational Leadership
California State University, Fullerton
Fullerton, CA

Allan Mucerino, EdD
Faculty Affiliate
Educational Leadership
California State University, Fullerton
Fullerton, CA
and Alvord Unified School District
Superintendent
Riverside County, CA

Dawn Person, PhD
Director
Center for Research on Educational Access and Leadership
California State University, Fullerton.
Fullerton, CA

Abstract

The impact of the pandemic and the political climate positioned school boards to advocate and leverage support and resources to inform and influence state education policy targeting the opportunity gap. This study assessed school board members' engagement levels with education policy and determined individual, institutional, and contextual factors that shape school board members' beliefs about state-level education policymaking processes and policymakers. This study's results could provide insights into how school boards serving underrepresented students mobilize to advance their policy goals and exercise their power as policymaking and policy-influencing bodies.

Keywords: school boards, educational policy, school policy, educational leadership, power and policy

The XUSD (a pseudonym) school board meeting began with three newly elected school board trustees taking their seats for the first time. All three trustees attended an online New Board Member Orientation from the state School Board Association and had access to the meeting agenda well before the meeting date. However, as the first school board meeting for this board progressed to the business items for the district, one newly elected trustee pondered out loud, “How are we supposed to know what to do with all this stuff?”

The trustee’s comment illustrates the challenge school board members face after each election. There is always new “stuff.” The last two school board election cycles have been defined by many factors, including a worldwide pandemic, polarized communities, information (and misinformation) that traveled at the speed of social media, and raucous school board meetings that pitted “parent’s rights” groups against equity and inclusion activists. What lacked clear and focused effort was sound educational policy aimed at improving the quality of education for all students.

Serving on an elected school board does not require expertise in school-related matters like curriculum, school finance, or educational policy. However, a lack of information or clarification about the trustee’s role may create misunderstandings and the inability to serve the students and constituents in the district. The impact of an overwhelmed or underprepared school board member in a school district with limited-resource communities extends beyond board decision-making. The impact trickles down to underserved students and amplifies disequilibrium and inequity.

The lack of expertise in understanding the ramifications of governance decisions is especially problematic. School boards are dealing with increasingly complex issues such as enrollment declines, inflation, the parental rights movement, and the temporary nature of federal pandemic relief funds (Roza, 2022).

Calls for change have become routine for leaders in K-12 public schools, often the result of value preferences internal or external to the organization, including those generated by federal and state actors (Cuban, 2004; Henig, 2009; Kirst, 2004; Land, 2002; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008; Schueler, 2019; Welsh, 2019). The pressure to meet federal and state mandates and the community demands increases accountability, and dissent from these actors falls on the elected trustees and the district administration.

There is considerable scholarly debate over the role and effectiveness of democratically elected school boards in performing an accountability function (Ford & Ihrke, 2015; Sampson, 2019; Shoher & Hartney, 2014).

The accumulation of federal, state, and local policies and programs, historically enacted as an equity response for the public good, have been built upon the inheritance of past reform, leaving school boards to implement reform efforts within a system that’s primarily responsible for the necessity of the reform in the first place (Cohen et al., 2018; Fusarelli & Young, 2011). Reform efforts seem to fall short of intended outcomes and then new reform is proposed and implemented.

Emerging evidence demonstrates that school boards may have an influence on student outcomes and play a key role in

creating and sustaining the conditions that support it after a century of hands-off governance related to instructional decisions, leaving that element to the education professionals (Alsbury & Gore, 2015; Delagardelle, 2008; Frankenberg & Diem, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Lashway, 2002; Plough, 2014). Yet, school boards are not always in control of their schools. They may have less authority to make decisions while being held increasingly accountable for student outcomes (Mountford, 2008; Plough, 2014; White et al., 2022).

Existing research has focused on the relationship between school board members' attitudes, beliefs, and actions and student achievement outcomes, typically after policies are codified by state or federal policy actors and operationalized by the superintendent (Eadens et al., 2020; Ford & Ihrke, 2015; Frankenberg & Diem, 2013). Less is known about school boards' understanding of and proactive engagement with state education policymaking processes. This study examined the beliefs of local school boards to determine how they influence access, implementation, and distribution of resources to limited-resourced communities for underserved students.

To center social justice, school leaders must look beyond the state policy's institutionalized structure (Mavrogordato & White, 2020, p. 31). Current policy contexts in California are ideal for studying school boards' engagement and involvement with education policy at the state level.

This research examined school board members' beliefs about and engagement in state education policymaking processes within this context of increasing involvement of state actors in education policymaking, particularly considering COVID-19 and community challenges about curricula and instructional

materials. As elected officials, school board members possess the authority to advocate for policies promoting equity in limited-resourced communities.

This study demonstrated characteristics of school board members that scholars have observed "are more anecdotal than empirical" (Alsbury, 2008; Delagardelle, 2008; Ford & Ihrke, 2016; Hess, 2002; Holman, 2017; Johnson, 2011; Kenney, 2020; Land 2002) as it relates to effectively preparing school board members to engage in the policymaking process that improves outcomes for underserved students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What sources of information (e.g., formal v. informal) influence school board members?
2. How do contextual, institutional, and individual factors influence school board members' education policy and decision-making processes?
3. How do school board members describe the forms of policy advocacy they are engaged in (e.g., develop legislative platforms, attend a legislative day at the capitol, communicate with legislators and/or staff) to address the opportunity gap in underserved communities in California?

Relevant literature

Through most of the 20th Century, school systems had few environmental pressures to improve student outcomes. This parallelism between organizations and their environment was attributed to a logic of confidence, and good faith, a term sociologists John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan used to describe the phenomenon of internal participants and external constituents cooperating in the

practices of avoidance, discretion, and overlooking (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 357). The logic of confidence led to a loss of confidence, expressed in state and federal encroachment, and an interest in creating alternative markets and, subsequently, choice. Like the institutions they govern, calls for school board reform to meet the demands of a postmodern education establishment resonated in board rooms (Cohen et al., 2017; Danzberger, 1994; Danzberger & Usdan, 1992; Fund, 1992; Kirst, 1994; Land, 2002; NSBF, 1999;).

What has since emerged as a loosening of the tightly coupled system institutionalized during the NCLB (2001) era, resulting in local policymakers implementing state and federal policy as partners in reform (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Coburn, 2005; Mavrogordato & White, 2017), carrying out states' constitutional guarantees of public education (Diem et al., 2015).

Despite school boards competing with various political actors and their interests at the local, state, and federal levels, they have an enormous impact on public education and influence student achievement (Diem et al., 2015; Eadens et al., 2020; Plough, 2014;). Minimal attention has been paid to school district governance and preparation to govern (Eadens et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2004). Yet, there is a growing body of research on school-board elections and governance challenges. Evaluating engagement in policy and policy processes and the influence of policy actors make this a timely and needed study.

Conceptual Framework

Practically all social and political institutions have roots in localism (Evans et al., 2013). State and federal policymakers' encroachment

has increasingly threatened local control as state and federal policymakers have advanced educational policies, including the gubernatorial influence (Kirst, 2004).

However, while today's school board members compete with various political actors and their interests, school boards significantly impact public education, shaping policies that have consequences in marginalized communities (Diem et al., 2015). Furthermore, research suggests that political actors value education leaders' voices when making education policies (White, 2018).

This study evaluates school board members' roles in policymaking and policymakers by drawing upon Crowson & Goldring's (2009) framework of new localism. Specifically, school boards facilitate prescriptive policies about health and safety amid COVID-19, learning loss mitigation, and instructional material selection in underserved communities.

While school boards shape top-down policy through bottom-up pathways to meet reform requirements (Barrett-Tatum & Ashworth, 2020), historically, they have not done so successfully when measured for equity (Bishop & Noguera, 2019). This study is viewed through school boards' lens as policy informants capable of impacting policy, not merely facilitating its implementation. We build upon this integrated framework to better understand how school board members perceive and engage in state education policymaking processes (White, 2019).

Methodology

Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. Focus groups provide insights into how people think and can provide a contextual understanding of the

group being studied (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018; Nyumba et al., 2018). We used the focus group methodology to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals who had served or were serving as school board members.

We used focus groups to collect data on complex questions, considering board member behaviors and their perception as important in influencing policy and policy decision-making. Former and current school board members were asked to participate in an exploratory focus group.

The focus group sessions allowed us to gain deeper insights into the role and level of board members' engagement in policy issues. The study's questions focused on sources of information board members used, contextual issues at multiple levels, and forms of policy advocacy they engage in service to underserved communities.

The focus group protocol (Appendix A) included eight questions inquiring about where school board members accessed information on policy and advocacy to ensure preparedness for board activities.

Questions included perceptions of their role as board members serving underserved communities, decision-making regarding policy, and what role the community plays in these decisions. Participants discussed their role as policy advocates.

Focus group participants were asked questions regarding their connection and level of engagement with the communities they serve. Questions about access to and onboarding resources, informal and formal, were included. Some additional discussion allowed participants to describe what the need, how they are challenged, and what could

be done to improve their engagement relative to policy.

Findings

Focus group data were analyzed through open coding and identification of emergent themes specific to the policy and policy decision-making and advocacy issues. Significant themes that emerged from the focus group included the importance of keeping students at the forefront of decision-making, the influential role of the community, communication with legislators at various levels of government, essential training for board members, and listening skills. Following is an analysis of each theme. An overview of the coded themes is in Appendix B.

Students at the forefront

Participants expressed the importance of putting the kids first when making educational policy decisions. The school board members' decisions are guided by what is in the best interest of the kids within their district(s). They understand that multiple factors can influence their policy decisions but always lead with the perspective that the children come first.

One participant stated,

For me, personally, as a school board member, every decision I made was based on what is best for the children in the district for those students sitting at those desks. And that helped me and just keep that always in the forefront of my decision-making was that, even when I spoke to parents, I spoke with that voice. And when I spoke to teachers and other communities, even businesspeople, it was with that voice, that perspective.

There was a consensus among the participants that guiding their decisions with the students at the forefront is imperative.

Significance of community participation

Many participants felt that the board members are responsible for being involved within their community and that they must interact with members of their community often better to understand the needs of that particular school district. Participants expressed that rich insight and information can be gathered from engaging with the community they serve.

A participant said,

They started talking, reaching out to different groups in the community. And we convened a big town hall meeting where everybody was invited. And for the first two and a half hours, we just sat back and let them, let it ride. We have two mics and come on up and talk.

Overall, the participants saw a benefit and need to collaborate with their community to better serve their school district(s).

Keeping close contact with legislators

There was a consensus among the participants that an effective way to advocate for policies and bills is to talk directly with their local legislators. They expressed the significance of building relationships with policy and lawmakers, as they have the power to influence which policies will impact certain school districts.

One participant expressed, “we kind of need to always keep in touch with our legislators so that they’re looking at the things that we’re looking at.” Without close communication between the school board members and legislators, there would be a disconnect between what policies and bills would be beneficial and essential within a school district. We can suggest that there is a benefit to the school districts in building a

relationship between the school board members and their local legislators.

Essential trainings for school board members

Participants stated the school board could benefit from improved and mandatory trainings and onboarding practices. There is a mutual understanding that there must be more efficient trainings and onboarding practices to ensure board members are serving their community to the best of their ability and are set up for success. They expressed there are high turnover rates, and at times board members are not knowledgeable about budgets, policies, nor opened their packets until the start of the meeting. To ensure board members are serving their district effectively, they need to thoroughly understand their role and how they can do their job successfully.

A participant stated,

Before a school board election, he would invite the candidates in, they talk about finances, the budget, you know, real key issues in the district where we were thinking of passing a school bond, and really educate and he would have his staff there to answer those questions... If a lot more districts did that, I think we get better prepared school board members.”

It is important to note that when the participant says “he,” it is referring to the superintendent.

Importance of listening skills

Participants expressed the importance of approaching board member meetings with an open mind. They discussed how essential it is to approach the decision-making process with the perspective of inquiry rather than a perspective of rigidity. A participant expressed the importance of “trying to look at issues

they're looking at from a perspective of inquiry, as opposed to here's the answer ... I think the listening skill is very important because you do want to hear from multiple sides."

As board members are committed to serving their school district, we would suggest encouraging them to engage in all types of conversations that stem from listening to a multitude of perspectives. Covering multiple perspectives allows the school board to approach unique issues that may have been previously missed and essentially better serves their district(s) and community members.

Discussion

This study analyzed focus group data on policy and policy decision-making and advocacy issues in education. The significant themes that emerged from the focus group included the importance of keeping students at the forefront of decision-making, the influential role of the community, communication with legislators at various levels of government, essential training for board members, and listening skills. Participants expressed the importance of putting children first when making educational policy decisions and engaging with the community to better serve their school district(s). They also highlighted the significance of building relationships with

policy and lawmakers and improving training and onboarding practices for board members. Finally, they stressed the importance of approaching board member meetings with an open mind and listening to multiple perspectives to better serve their district(s) and community members.

The impact of the pandemic and the political climate positioned school boards to advocate and leverage support and resources to inform and influence state education policy targeting the opportunity gap. This study assessed school board members' engagement levels with education policy and determined individual, institutional, and contextual factors that shape school board members' beliefs about state-level education policymaking processes and policymakers. This study's results could provide insights into how school boards serving underrepresented students mobilize to advance their policy goals and exercise their power as policymaking and policy-influencing bodies. Furthermore, results may inform ongoing broad member training programs about influencing state education policy targeting the opportunity gap by professional associations such as the California School Boards Association and the National School Boards Association.

Author Biographies

Nancy Watkins is an assistant professor of educational leadership in the college of education at California State University in Fullerton, and the director for the educational doctorate program. E-mail: nwatkins@fullerton.edu

Allan Mucerino is a faculty affiliate of the California State University, Fullerton's College of Education, and a superintendent of schools for the Alvord Unified School District in Riverside County, CA. E-mail: amucerino@fullerton.edu

Dawn Person is the director of the center for research on educational access and leadership (C-REAL) of the College of Education at California State University, Fullerton. E-mail: dperson@fullerton.edu

References

- Alsbury, T. L. (2008). School board politics and student achievement. In T. L. Alsbury (Ed.), *The future of school board governance: Relevancy and revelation* (pp. 247-272). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Education.
- Alsbury, T. L., & Gore, P. (2015). *Improving school board effectiveness: A balanced governance approach*. Harvard Education Press.
- Barrett-Tatum, J., & Ashworth, K. (2020). Moving educational policy to educators' lived reality: One state's trickle-down, bottom-up pathway to literacy intervention reform. *Journal of Educational Change*, 1-24.
- Bishop, J. P., & Noguera, P. A. (2019). The ecology of educational equity: Implications for policy. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 94(2), 122-141.
- Callahan, R.M. & Shifrer, D. (2016). Equitable access for secondary English learner students: Course taking as evidence of EL program effectiveness. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(3), 463-496.
- Coburn, C.E. (2005). Shaping teacher sensemaking: School leaders and the enactment of reading policy. *Educational Policy*, 19(3), 476-509.
- Cohen, D. K., Spillane, J. P., & Peurach, D. J. (2018). The dilemmas of educational reform. *Educational Researcher*, 47(3), 204-212.
- Crowson, R.L. & Goldring, E.B. (Eds). (2009). *The new localism in American education*, 108th yearbook for the study of education. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cuban L., (2004). *Who's in Charge Here?: The Tangled Web of School Governance and Policy*, edited by Noel Epstein, Brookings Institution Press, 2004. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/fullerton/detail.action?docID=268835>.
- Danzberger, J. P. (1994). Governing the nation's schools: The case for restructuring local school boards. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 75(5), 367-379.
- Danzberger, J. P. & Usdan, M. D. (1992). How school boards see themselves and how their policies see them. *School boards: Changing local control*, ed. Patricia F. First and Herbert J. Walberg. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing.
- Delagardelle, M. L. (2008). The lighthouse inquiry: Examining the role of school board leadership in the improvement of student achievement. In T. Alsbury (Ed.), *The future of school board governance: Relevancy and revelation* (pp. 191-224). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

- Diem, S., Frankenberg, E., & Cleary, C. (2015). Factors that influence school board policy-making: The political context of student diversity in urban-suburban districts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 51(5), 712-752.
- Eadens, D. W., Davidson, F. D., & Eadens, D. M. (2020). Growing evidence of the value of school board training. *Education Leadership Review*, 21(1), 1-13.
- Evans, M., Marsh, D., & Stoker, G. (2013). Understanding localism. *Policy Studies*, 34(4), 401-407.
- Ford, M. F., & Ihrke, D. (2015) School board member definitions of accountability: What are they, and do they impact district outcomes?, *Public Performance & Management Review*, 39:1, 198-222, DOI: 10.1080/15309576.2016.1071173
- Fund, T. C. (1992). Facing the challenge: The report of the twentieth-century fund task force on school governance. With a background paper by Jacqueline P. Danzberger). New York: Twentieth Century Fund.
- Frankenberg, E., & Diem, S. (2013). School board leadership and policymaking in changing political environments. *The Urban Review*, 45(2), 117-142.
- Fusarelli, B. C., & Cooper, B. S. (Eds.). (2009). The rising state: How state power is transforming our nation's schools. Suny Press.
- Fusarelli, B. C., & Young, T. V. (2011). Preserving the "public" in public education for the sake of democracy. *Journal of Thought*, 46(1-2), 85-96.
- Gal-Arieli, N., Beeri, I., Vigoda-Gadot, E., & Reichman, A. (2017). New localism or fuzzy centralism: Policymakers' perceptions of public education and involvement in education. *Local Government Studies*, 43(4), 598-620.
- Gentzel, T. J. (2016). Why school boards? *American School Board Journal*, 203(2).
- Heise, M. (2017). From no child left behind to every student succeeds: Back to a future for education federalism. *Colum. L. Rev.*, 117, 1859.
- Henig, J. B. (2013). The end of exceptionalism in American education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Henig, J. R. (2009). The politics of localism in an era of centralization, privatization, and choice. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 108(1), 112-129.
- Hess, F. M. (2002). School boards at the turn of the 21st Century: Conditions and challenges of school governance. Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association.

- Holman, M. R. (2017). Women in local government: What we know and where we go from here. *State and Local Government Review*, 49, 285-296.
- .IEL (1994). Local education governance: Perspectives on problems and strategies for change. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 00317217, Jan, Vol. 75, Issue 5
- Johnson, P. A. (2012). School board governance: The times they are a-changin'. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 15(2), 83-102.
- Kenney, A. W. (2020). Negotiating authority in the ritual of the public school board meeting. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 56(5), 705–735.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X19891223>
- Kirst, M., (2004). Who's in Charge Here?: The Tangled Web of School Governance and Policy, edited by Noel Epstein, Brookings Institution Press, 2004. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/fullerton/detail.action?docID=268835>.
- Kirst, M. W. (2010). The political and policy dynamics of K-12 education reform from 1965 to 2010: Implications for changing postsecondary education. Research Priorities for Broad-Access Higher Education.
- Land, D. (2002). Local school boards under review: Their role and effectiveness in relation to students' academic achievement. *Review of Educational Research*, 72(2), 229-278.
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How Leadership Influences Student Learning. Review of Research. Wallace Foundation, The.
- Marsh, J. A., & Hall, M. (2018). Challenges and choices: A multidistrict analysis of statewide mandated democratic engagement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 55(2), 243286.
- Mavrogordato, M., & White, R. S. (2017). Reclassification variation: How policy implementation guides the process of exiting students from English learner status. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 39(2), 281-310.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340-363.
- Morgan, D., & Hoffman, K. (2018). Focus groups. In D. Morgan, & K. Hoffman Focus Groups (pp. 250-263). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070>
- Mountford, M. (2008). Historical and current tensions among board-superintendent teams: Symptoms or cause? In T. L. Alsbury (Ed.), *The future of school board governance: Relevancy and revelation* (pp. 81-114). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

- Nyumba, T. O., Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J., Mukherjee, N., & Geneletti, D. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 9(1), 20-32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210x.12860>
- Plough, B. (2014). School board governance and student achievement: School board members' perceptions of their behaviors and beliefs. *Educational Leadership and Administration. Teaching and Program Development*, 25, 41-53.
- Roza, M. (2022). What goes wrong when some school board members don't understand district finances? Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/margueriteroza/2022/07/28/what-goes-wrong-when-some-school-board-members-dont-understand-district-finances/?sh=b5053ec2e8d3>
- Sampson, C. (2019). (Im)Possibilities of Latinx school board members' educational leadership toward equity. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 55, 296-32
- Schueler, B. E. (2019). A third way: The politics of school district takeover and turnaround in Lawrence, Massachusetts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 55, 116-153.
- Shober, A. F., Hartney, M. T. (2014). Does school board leadership matter? Retrieved from <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/does-school-board-leadership-matter>
- Stringfield, S. (2008). School boards and raising student outcomes: Reflections (Confessions?) of a former school board member. In T. L. Alsbury (Ed.), *The future of school board governance: Relevancy and revelation* (pp. 273-294). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Education.
- Weiß, W. 2009. "Local Government Education Policy: Developments, Concepts, and Perspectives." <https://difu.de/node/6861>
- Welsh, R. O. (2019). Recovery, achievement, and opportunity: A comparative analysis of state takeover districts in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Georgia. *Urban Education*, 54, 311-338.
- White, R.S., Stitzlein, S., Abowitz, K.K., Gottlieb, D., Schneider, J., and Kogan, V. (2023). Are School Boards Failing? A feature sparks a response and a defense. *Education Next*, 23(1), 68-74.
- White, R. (2018). Who do state policy makers listen to? The case of teacher evaluation. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99(8).

Appendix A

Focus Group Questions

1. In thinking about your role now as a school board members trustee, how do you access information that prepares you for the decisions that you're required to make as a school board member?
2. What role does community play in your policymaking decision?
3. What does it mean to you to engage in policy advocacy? When you hear that term policy advocacy?
4. What does that mean to you?
5. Are there ways that you have not yet engaged in advocacy, but that you would like to engage in policy advocacy as a school board member?
6. Do any of you or your districts maintain a lobbyist and do you develop an annual legislative platform?
7. Given what you know about the onboarding strategies for school board members, what resources would equip school board members to support underserved communities?

Appendix B

Coding

Category	Theme	Description	Quotation
Student Focused	Students at the forefront	Participants expressed the importance of making educational policy decisions that are in the best interest of the students first and foremost	“It’s about the kids ... for me, personally, as a school board member, every decision I made was based on what is best for the children in the district for those students sitting in those desks. And that helped me and really just keep that always in the forefront of my decision making was that, and even when I spoke to parents, I spoke with that voice. And when I spoke to teachers and other community, even business people, it was with that voice, that perspective... I advocate for all of our all of our students”
Involvement	Significance of community participation	Participants conveyed that board members must be in the community quite a bit to better understand the needs of that particular school district	“We started talking, reaching out to different groups in the community. And we convened a big town hall meeting where everybody was invited. And for the first two and a half hours, we just sat back and let them, let it ride, we have two mics and come on up and talk... find out what's going on in the community. So you can help in any possible way. But I think just reaching out to different people in your surrounding areas.”
Connections with policymakers	Keeping close contact with legislators	One effective way to advocate for certain policies and bills is going directly to the local legislators. Participants expressed the importance of building relationships with their legislators in order to see the policies they need implemented within their school districts	“We would bring all our legislators into one room when we were going through a tough budget time. And we would have a couple of teachers speak, we would have a couple students speak, we would bring the argument to them ... so we didn't just sit around, we really advocated openly and aggressively ... we kind of need to always keep in touch with our legislators so that they're looking at the things that we're looking at ... our group is very active in contacting legislators. Our legislators are very open.”
Training Practicum	Essential trainings for board members	There is a need to better prepare school board members to understand their role and how to do their job effectively	“I think absolute best practice is for a superintendent to basically give an orientation for candidates so that they have some clue because literally, you get people running, and they don't even they don't know what the budget is they don't understand the organization... before a school board election, he would invite the candidates in, they talk about finances, the budget, you know, real key issues in the district where we were thinking of passing a school bond, and really educate and he would have his staff there to answer those questions... If a lot more districts did that, I think we

			<p>get better prepared school board members ... I think it's really, really important to do a thorough job of onboarding trustees and taking advantage of all those types of opportunities... onboarding is critical. Now more than ever, because so much turnover is happening on so many school boards.”</p>
Perspective of Inquiry	Importance of listening skills	Participants discussed how essential listening skills are in the decision-making process to ensure they are covering multiple perspectives to better serve their district(s)	<p>“I think that's an important piece of being a school board member is I come with my opinions. But I need to be open to listening to everybody... trying to look at issues that are looking at it from a perspective of inquiry, as opposed to here's the answer.... I think the listening skill is very important because you do want to hear from multiple sides.”</p>

The Praying Football Coach Supreme Court Decision: Five Implications for School Administrators

Michael Shaffer, EdD
Associate Clinical Professor
Department of Educational Leadership
Ball State University
Muncie, IN

Janet R. Decker, JD and PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
School of Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN

Jennifer A. Rippner, JD and PhD
Lecturer
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
School of Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN

Abstract

School administrators have often been admonished that it is illegal for teachers and other employees to pray in front of students. *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, also known as “the praying football coach” decision, appears to have changed that, but many questions remain as to the extent and implications of this unprecedented U.S. Supreme Court decision. This article describes why this court case was so significant. It summarizes the relevant facts of the case and the Court’s majority and dissenting opinions. The article also provides school leaders with guidance about how to respond to this seminal case by concluding with five implications of the Court’s decision.

Keywords: school law, U.S. Supreme Court, religion, church-state, legal issues

In 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against a school district reasoning that the district must allow a football coach's post-game prayer. The case, *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, is confusing to many school leaders, teachers, and legal scholars who wonder if the decision signals a major shift in how religion should be viewed in public schools. This article aims to provide clarity and offer legal guidance on that question. First, it describes the significance of church-state issues in schools and it details the Supreme Court precedent about this issue that has developed over the course of sixty years. Second, it summarizes the facts of the *Kennedy* case, as well as the majority and dissenting opinions. Finally, it provides educators with five implications of this seminal case.

Why does it matter if coaches pray?

Religious expression in schools may seem innocuous, leading some school leaders to ignore it. For example, leaders may overlook teachers praying with students because they believe it is easier to go along with community norms or they believe that praying is good and doesn't hurt anyone else. In contrast, other leaders recognize that the separation of church and state is one of the founding principles of American democracy.

The Founding Fathers were aware of the dangers of religious persecution and included the Establishment Clause in our Constitution, which forbids the government from creating laws relating to an "establishment of religion."

These opposing views on church-state interaction make sense considering the Constitution also includes the Free Exercise Clause, prohibiting the government from interfering with the "free exercise" of religion. Thus, school leaders and courts have repeatedly

faced inherent constitutional tensions when confronting religion in public schools.

Due to these tensions and the changing legal landscape, it is imperative for school leaders to understand the *Kennedy* case as it signals a pivotal and unprecedented shift in how the Court addresses religion in schools. From the 1940s until 2000, the Supreme Court primarily took a separationist stance and prohibited many religious practices in public schools including:

- Religious instruction (1948, 1952)
- Teacher-led prayer (1962, 1985) and Bible reading (1963)
- Clergy-led invocations at graduation (1992)
- Student-led prayer before athletic events (2000)

In these decisions, the Supreme Court reasoned that the Establishment Clause prohibited coercion, endorsement, and entanglement of religion (McCarthy, 2022).

In the 1990s, the Court shifted to a more accommodationist stance. Recent Court decisions have permitted:

- State aid to religious schools for interpreters (1993), Title I/remedial instruction in religious schools (1997), materials/equipment (2000), vouchers (2002, 2011), grant funding (2017), tax credits (2020), and tuition reimbursement (2022)
- A football coach's post-game prayer (2022).

Throughout the 1990s, the Court focused on the Establishment Clause in evaluating church-state issues. In most cases, the Court found the Establishment Clause, prohibiting government-sanction religion, was

not violated and allowed the religious activity to continue. More recently though, the Court has turned its attention to the Free Exercise Clause in evaluating religious expression in schools. This new approach focuses on the religious expression of individuals and accommodates the expression in an attempt to avoid religious discrimination (McCarthy, 2022).

Some critics argue that *Kennedy* is a groundbreaking case that has seriously eroded the separation of church and state. They agree with *Kennedy's* dissenting justices in their warning that the decision “sets us further down a perilous path in forcing States to entangle themselves with religion, with all of our rights hanging in the balance” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton*, 2022, dissenting opinion, p. 35). If the line of reasoning used by the majority justices in the *Kennedy* case is extended to future cases, critics fear that church and state will be further entangled in public schools through prayer, funding, and/or curriculum.

Renowned church/state legal scholar, Dr. Martha McCarthy, warns that “[k]eeping church and state discrete in education has served us well [for over six decades], and we all should be fearful of its demise” (2022, p. 569). She explains that *Kennedy* should matter to educators because the Supreme Court left them with little guidance on how to apply this ruling to situations they face. McCarthy also discusses how the decision could be used to discriminate against students and school employees.

Some educators may “couch in religious beliefs their condemnation of LGBTQ [individuals]” (p. 569). Thus, the recent case matters because its implications stretch beyond one coach simply praying in a Christian community.

Who was the praying football coach, and how did the *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* controversy start?

Joseph Kennedy was an assistant varsity football coach at Bremerton High School (BHS) in Washington State. For a number of years, he had developed a post-game routine of praying by himself on the 50-yard line.

Over time, students noticed, and he was joined not only by players on the Bremerton team, but also by players on the opposing teams. Kennedy also infused religious messages and led prayers into his pre- and post-game speeches and rituals where students and staff were in attendance (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, dissenting opinion, p. 4).

Little by little, more students stopped by the after-game prayers, whether by invitation or by curiosity, and the size of the group grew until it was common for even the coaches of the opposing teams to join the circle. At some point, coaches from opposing teams reported to their administrators what was happening at BHS football games. Those administrators then called the BHS administrators about the prayer sessions (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, dissenting opinion, p. 4).

BHS administrators informed Kennedy that he could continue a private practice of religion, but that it must be “physically separate from student activity, and students may not be allowed to join such activity” (Hoppe, Arasim, & Piper, 2020, p. 174). The school district believed that it was providing Kennedy with the religious accommodation that was required by the Free Exercise Clause.

Did Coach Kennedy comply with the accommodations suggested by the school district?

For a brief period of time, Kennedy complied. Then, he hired an attorney who submitted a letter to the District claiming Kennedy was entitled to religious accommodation under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The letter announced that Kennedy would resume his religious activity because his post-game activity occurred during “non-instructional hours” (Hoppe, Arasim, & Piper, 2020, p. 174). When Kennedy announced his intent to resume praying, he gained a great deal of media attention. Kennedy began to accept numerous speaking engagements in a media blitz, discussing his right to pray at school on the football field.

The conflict continued when the District told Kennedy that his job *could be* and *would be* in jeopardy if he continued his practice of praying after games and holding devotionals in the locker room. The District provided Kennedy with additional religious accommodations such as allowing him to pray after students had left the field and spectators had left the stands (Hoppe, Arasim, & Piper, 2020).

However, Kennedy argued that he had the right to express his religion freely in his own way and rejected the District’s accommodations. As a result, the District claimed that Kennedy’s prayer was a violation of the Establishment Clause because Kennedy was still wearing school-logoed clothing and was still on duty (Hoppe, Arasim, & Piper, 2020). Eventually, the District did not renew Kennedy’s coaching contract for the coming school year citing Kennedy’s “decision to persist in praying quietly without his students after three games in October 2015” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton*, 2022, majority opinion, p. 2).

In response, Kennedy filed a lawsuit against the District alleging violations of Free Speech and Free Exercise under the First

Amendment. Both the federal district court and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided in favor of the school district and Kennedy appealed the case to the Supreme Court.

What did the Supreme Court decide?

In a 6:3 decision, the Court’s majority held in favor of the praying football coach. The majority opinion reasoned that there was no coercion surrounding Kennedy’s post-game prayer. To reach its decision, the majority abandoned the *Lemon* test and applied a historical approach to determine whether religious activity violates the Establishment Clause.

For many years, the *Lemon* test, which derived from *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), guided schools in determining whether religious activities in schools were legal. The *Lemon* test has three parts. Did the religious activity have a secular purpose? Was there a primary effect of the religious activity that either advanced or inhibited religion? Did the activity foster an excessive government entanglement with religion? If the activity had a secular purpose, did not advance or inhibit religion, or foster an excessive entanglement with religion, the religious activity was permissible.

However, in recent Supreme Court cases, the *Lemon* test has slowly been downgraded and used less as a measuring stick. In the majority opinion in *Kennedy*, Justice Gorsuch explained that the *Lemon* test as out of date and instead of applying it, “the Establishment Clause must be interpreted by ‘reference to historical practices and understandings’” (p. 23). He asserted that the Court has a “traditional understanding that permitting private speech is not the same thing as coercing others to participate in it” (p. 29). Gorsuch identified “a long constitutional tradition” where citizens must learn “how to

tolerate diverse expressive activities” in order to live in a “pluralistic society” (p. 29).

Thus, the majority characterized Kennedy’s prayer as a private, personal, and quiet act that was protected by the First Amendment’s Free Exercise and Free Speech clauses. The majority affirmed that even though Kennedy was still on duty and being paid to supervise students, his prayer was conducted at a time when other coaches were permitted to check email and phone home, so supervisory duties were perfunctory at best.

The majority highlighted the standard set in *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) that both teachers and students have constitutional free speech rights that are not removed once they enter the schoolhouse gates but tempered that statement by stating that public school employees are not given boundless free speech rights where they “may deliver any message to anyone anytime they wish” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, majority opinion, p. 15).

What was the Supreme Court’s Dissenting Opinion?

The dissenting opinion was written by Justice Sotomayor and argued that the majority misconstrued the facts (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, dissenting opinion, p. 1). To support this assertion, Sotomayor provided a thorough summary of the factual record including details not provided by the media accounts. Uncharacteristic of Supreme Court opinions, Sotomayor also included three pictures of Coach Kennedy’s prayers.

Sotomayor highlighted that during Kennedy’s “personal religious observance,” he was still

1. dressed in school-logoed, team attire,
2. located in areas of the school football field not open to the public,

3. actively involved in supervision of students on the football team immediately after the game and responsible for their behavior and conduct, and
4. often surrounded by his players as well as players and coaches from the opposing teams during his prayer.

The dissenting opinion reasoned that the majority had incorrectly focused on Kennedy’s prayer without recognizing that it was “part of a longstanding practice of the employee ministering religion to students as the public watched” (p. 14).

The dissent identified that many different faiths are represented in the school district including: “Bahá’ís, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, and many denominations of Christians, as well as numerous residents who are religiously unaffiliated” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, dissenting opinion, p. 3).

Sotomayor also raised concerns about the coercion of players who sought to gain the coach’s approval, as well as pressure from their peers to join in the prayer. The dissent highlighted that students’ minds are developing and “are quite subject to coercive thought and that is especially true when those same students are seeking approval and playing time from a coach who is leading the devotional and prayer” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, dissenting opinion, p. 5).

The dissent concluded that Court majority erred by failing to attend to issues of endorsement and by abandoning the *Lemon* test. Ultimately, the Establishment Clause was violated because Kennedy was “on the job as a school official ‘on government property’ when he incorporated a public, demonstrative prayer” into a school event (p. 16).

What are the implications of *Kennedy* for school leaders?

1. The facts matter.

Although the Court sided with the coach, the decision only applies to the facts in this particular case. It is not a broad statement of law providing that prayer in schools is always legal. Importantly, the Court recognized that it involved “quiet,” “post-game,” and “personal” prayer” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, majority opinion, pp. 4-5).

Additionally, the coach was no longer “leading prayers with the team or before any other captive audience” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, majority opinion, p. 13). Therefore, school leaders should distinguish these facts from situations that they encounter. Notably, *Kennedy* involved a non-captive audience *after* an extracurricular event; it was not a situation during the instructional day, and the majority did not believe that the coach was proselytizing.

Another important distinction to note is that this case occurred at a high school. The Court stated, “[t]his Court has long recognized as well that ‘secondary school students are mature enough . . . to understand that a school does not endorse,’ let alone coerce them to participate in, ‘speech that it merely permits on a nondiscriminatory basis’” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, majority opinion, p. 26). Thus, the long-standing precedent that school-sponsored religious actions—which would include school employees praying with or proselytizing to students—remains unconstitutional.

2. School employees can still be disciplined for engaging in religious activities at school.

School leaders should not misinterpret the *Kennedy* decision to assume that ‘everything goes’ when it comes to employees expressing

their religious beliefs. Administrators should continue to educate teachers and non-teaching staff including athletic directors and coaches about the limits of their religious expression.

A Seventh Circuit case upholding the dismissal of a school counselor who had prayed and promoted religion to students provides an example of what school employees are not allowed to do (*Grossman v. South Shore Public School District*, 2007).

In another relevant case, the Third Circuit approved a district policy forbidding faculty participation in student-initiated prayer after a football coach had kneeled and bowed his head while players engaged in prayer in locker room (*Borden v. School District of Township of East Brunswick*, 2008).

3. It remains legal for educators to engage in private religious expression, and they must permit student-initiated, non-disruptive religious expression.

Again, the decades of church/state decisions are not overruled in *Kennedy*. The Court explained that educators may continue to engage in private religious expression such as “wearing a yarmulke to school” or “praying quietly over lunch” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, majority opinion, p. 28). Similarly, multiple past decisions protect student-initiated, non-disruptive prayer and other religious activities.

It also remains legal for parents or teachers to opt out of public schools to choose more intensive religious instruction offered at private schools. At an increasing rate, the Supreme Court has supported public funding being available for religious, private schooling.

4. Proof of coercion seems to be the key requirement for an Establishment Clause violation, and courts consider historical

practice and meaning of the government-related act.

Many legal scholars are curious what the new legal standard is after *Kennedy*. For decades, the Supreme Court was known to apply three tests to determine if the Establishment Clause had been violated. However, after *Kennedy*, the application of these tests appears to have shifted, as the Court discredited the *Lemon* and Endorsement tests.

In *Kennedy*, the majority stated that Establishment Clause should be analyzed “by ‘reference to historical practices and understandings’” and that religion clauses have “complementary purposes, not warring ones” (pp. 20-23). Therefore, the Court emphasized the U.S. history and tradition of religious pluralism, which permits actions such as reciting “under God” during the Pledge of Allegiance or praying before school board meetings.

At the same time, the Court discussed that the players were not coerced to join the coach in his post-game prayer, and thus, focusing on the coercive effect of religious activity appears to remain to be a significant aspect in determining whether the Establishment Clause has been violated.

The Court has long emphasized that educators must recognize that their students are a captive audience who are legally required to attend school. Additionally, students are impressionable and susceptible to both explicit and implicit coercion. Educators are both role models and authority figures, and students can feel pressures that are not always obvious. Therefore, when school leaders are providing legal guidance to their staff, emphasis should be placed on avoiding any type of coercive religious expression.

5. School leaders must stay abreast of evolving church/state precedent.

Sotomayor’s dissent stressed that the majority opinion provides no guidance for school leaders and educators. She criticized that “this decision does a disservice to schools and the young citizens they serve, as well as to our Nation’s longstanding commitment to the separation of church and state” (*Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 2022, dissenting opinion, p. 2).

Thus, important questions remain about how *Kennedy* will influence future court rulings. How will courts respond when the religious activity in question is not *Christian* religious activity? For example, in response to the media attention about Coach Kennedy’s prayer, the Satanic Temple of Seattle came to protest at the high school’s football field (Nguyen, 2015). Will future courts see an increase of litigation involving educators who identify as Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and other religions who have become more emboldened to express their religious beliefs while they are on school property with students present? What will the aftereffects of *Kennedy* be?

Until school leaders have additional guidance, it is vital that they proactively increase the legal literacy of their staff. They can do this at faculty meetings, professional development events, or even sharing this article. They also could discuss with staff why ethically, as opposed to legally, educators may decide it is important to take a separationist stance. For example, they could remind their colleagues that there are over 100 religious sects in the U.S. and many others who are atheists or agnostic. The leaders could facilitate exercises, case studies, or conversations to evoke empathy for students, colleagues, and

community members who may be in the religious minority. Leaders could discuss the

school's mission or values ensuring that no students feel unwelcome.

Author Biographies

Michael Shaffer is an associate clinical professor at Ball State University. E-mail: mbshaffer@bsu.edu

Janet Decker is an associate professor at Indiana University and a co-author of *Legal Rights of School Leaders, Teachers, and Students* (Pearson, 2019). E-mail: deckerjr@iu.edu

Jennifer Rippner is a lecturer in Indiana University's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. E-mail: jrippner@iu.edu

References

- Borden v School District of Township of East Brunswick*, 523 F.3d 153 (3rd Cir. 2008). FindLaw. <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-3rd-circuit/1432750.html>
- Grossman v South Shore Public School District*, 507 F.3d 1097 (7th Cir. 2007). FindLaw. <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-7th-circuit/1032103.html>
- Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 597 U.S. ___, No. 21-418 (2022). https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/21-418_i425.pdf
- Lemon v Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971). FindLaw. <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/403/602.html#:~:text=The%20District%20Court%20concluded%20that,112>.
- Lower-Hoppe, L. & Arasim, R. & Piper, C. (2020). Private citizen versus public official: A case analysis of coaches' freedom of religion. *The Physical Educator*, 77, 173-181.
- McCarthy, M. (2022). *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*: Farewell to the Establishment Clause, *West's Education Law Reporter*, 402, 557-569.
- Nguyen, G. (Nov. 4, 2015). Satanists attend Bremerton High School football game, people protest. World Religion News. <https://www.worldreligionnews.com/religion-news/christianity/satanists-hold-invocation-at-football-game-people-protest/>

Grow Your Own Programs: An Opportunity for Universities and School Districts to Collaborate and Reshape Principal Preparation

Lisa Allen, EdD
Dean
Professor of Education
School of Education
Campbellsville University
Campbellsville, KY

Joseph Wallace, DSL
Associate Professor
School of Education
Campbellsville University
Campbellsville, KY

Franklin Thomas, EdD
Assistant Professor
School of Education
Campbellsville University
Campbellsville, KY

Abstract

Research suggests that traditional models for principal preparation often do not adequately prepare principals for the challenges of their daily work. This study examines how one private university in the south utilized a Grow Your Own (GYO) concept to provide principal candidates with more authentic field-based cohort learning that revolved around problem solving and meeting the needs of students in their schools in real time. The GYO collaborative model provides an opportunity for P-12 and post-secondary education to merge theory and practice in an integration of expertise and resources that utilizes a course by course exploration of the domain of educational leadership—allowing for real world training with a scholarly backdrop that offers the candidate a rich and authentic experience.

Keywords: principal preparation, Grow Your Own, field-based learning, collaboration, authentic learning

The challenges our P-12 schools face require principals to be diverse problem solvers equipped with practical experience from the first day on the job. According to Gill (2012), university-based school principal training programs inadequately prepare participants for the challenges that they will face, especially for schools with high student academic and life skill needs, regardless of the geography and demographics of the school. Partnerships between universities and school districts may be an important avenue for addressing this concern.

A study funded by the Wallace Foundation, in collaboration with the Rand Institute and seven universities, revealed the need for stronger alignment with the school district's specific needs, stronger syncing with state requirements and national standards, field work that exposes the candidate to 'real world' experiences, mentoring from experienced coaches and other support, and collaboration in a cohort model that creates peer support during the program as well as after the course work is completed (Herman, et al., 2022).

Sanchez, Burnham, & Zaki (2019) found that the essential components of these partnerships included redesigning the course sequence, syllabi revision, a co-teaching model consisting of one university faculty member and one or two current practicing principals, and on-going internship experiences. Based on similar university-district partnerships in North Carolina, Horner and Jordan (2020) suggest that regular engagement between district leadership and university contacts as well as joint recruitment and selection are important university-district activities.

Sutcher, Podolsky, & Espinoza (2017) found that pre-service learning in authentic contexts eases the transition into the principal

role because new principals encounter familiar tasks. Dodson (2015) surveyed 1,006 principals across seven states and found that they felt field experiences better prepared them for their role as principal. Similarly, Gumus (2015) found that primary and middle school principals frequently stated that an internship was the most important pre-service training that they received. Specifically, they indicated that working with experienced and successful principals during the internship was the most beneficial aspect.

One model of principal preparation that meets these program criteria is the Grow Your Own (GYO) Model. These programs have demonstrated success in eliminating barriers for candidate success and providing intentional authentic field experiences. They are developed through collaborative partnerships between school districts and universities with shared responsibilities for recruiting, instruction, assessment, and developing social networks (Lemoine, McCormack, & Richardson, 2018). While there currently is not a universal model for GYO programs, they are distinguishable from traditional programs in the candidates that they recruit and the amount and types of support candidates receive from these programs (Muñiz, J., 2020).

Purpose

Gray (2018) presented a research model of leadership preparation that includes early and continual field and experiential learning throughout coursework, coaching through practicum and internships, and mentoring through partnerships between universities and school districts. It is within this framework that the current study is situated. This study examines the benefits of the GYO model of principal preparation in comparison to traditional models from the perspective 13 candidates who are halfway through the program, 19 program alumni, and four school

district administrators who co-teach coursework with university faculty.

The GYO Principal Programs that are part of this study are collaborative partnerships between a mid-size private university in the south and five regional public school districts. The programs are characterized by field experiences that begin during the first course and continue throughout the program focused on the needs of specific schools within the district. Major program assessments involve action research and include practice with school budgets, evaluation of faculty and staff, and meeting diversity, equity, and inclusion needs of students, families and faculties. The programs include an internship and the option to receive temporary certification to work as a school principal while candidates are completing the program. In both instances, candidates are coached and mentored by both university faculty and administrators within their school district.

Data were collected from volunteers for the study using audio recorded, in-person focus groups. These focus groups were conducted at the regional sites where each GYO cohort met. The researcher who led each focus group was also the professor who had co-taught in that cohort and so was familiar to the participants. The focus group recordings were transcribed and responses across the regional sites were grouped by question. Responses from the regional sites were color-coded to facilitate the identification of any information unique to a site. This data was then analyzed to identify main ideas and then similar main ideas were grouped into themes. Throughout this process, quotations from participants were noted that were good illustrations of the identified themes.

A convergent parallel mixed methods approach was used with the results of the focus groups and the results of an online survey

completed by district administrators who served as adjunct instructors for the various cohorts (Creswell, 2014). This survey consisted of Likert-type and multiple-choice questions that allowed the respondent to, “Select all that apply”. The multiple-choice questions also contained an “Other” option that provided for an open-ended response. The quantitative survey data was analyzed descriptively using bar charts to show the frequency distribution of the possible responses to each question. Open-ended responses were analyzed in the same manner as the focus group data. A side-by-side comparison technique was then used with the focus group and survey data (Creswell, 2014).

Results

Candidates found the field experiences and project-based learning relevant and enjoyable, and several reported having new understanding about why their principals made some decisions in the past that they didn’t agree with. One candidate said, “I feel like having been part of the GYO program makes it more relevant. We’re able to tailor the projects and assignments to be something that’s beneficial to our schools and our students whereas, I felt like in some of my other programs, I was just completing an assignment that was completely irrelevant to my students or my school in that week.” Another candidate said, “...I think just in general, all of the classes have forced me to look outside of just my department and expanded my view of what it means to be a teacher in the system and to see things from a principal’s point of view. I would wonder why the principal did things the way he did...Now I see that they are juggling a lot of things that as a classroom teacher I didn’t notice.”

Alumni commented about the relevance of the school-based projects that they completed through the program. One stated, “All of the school improvement projects that I did, I presented to the site based [council]. I

presented to the principal, you know a lot of things about math...the field experience and just the conversations helped me view things more from a school-wide perspective.” Another alumnus said, “...we got access to assignments that were built into what our district needs. It wasn’t a generic, ‘here is a blanket assignment.’ It was something that was going on in your district and [you] try to solve it as if you were an administrator. And that was appealing to me.” One hundred percent of participating adjunct faculty also reported that one of the benefits of the program was that the GYO model ensures that principals are intentionally prepared to meet needs specific to the school district in which they are prepared.

The study also found that candidates felt the program prepared them dispositionally for the role of principal in their schools. One alumnus commented, “One of the last things we talked about was dispositional hiring, there towards the end of our studies. That was something that helped me prepare, but that it also allowed me to go in and start revamping some of the things how we hired the rest of the summer.” Another alumnus stated, “It’s one thing to think that way; it’s another thing to act that way. So, it’s really this program, cohort, profession, really honed in on how to act that way. And I feel like I’ve got a good firsthand example of what that can look like and then how can I take that into the job I have and try my best to every day, walk in and serve others and lead by serving. So now, you know, in the books you wrote and then the things that we talked about, it provided us a good starting path to kind of jump into.” Several alumni specifically mentioned that the program prepared them to be servant leaders in their schools. “Servant leadership is... our job as principals, to support teachers so they can support our kids, and I feel like every class, you know, everything we did, helped us to be able to support teachers.”

Another finding of this study was how much candidates appreciated the community of practice into which they developed. An alumnus said, “I enjoyed the cohort very much because I was working with my peers, people that are working in the same district or a neighboring district, so we were dealing with generally the same population of kids. Things of that nature, we were able to bounce ideas off of each other. I thought it was much more beneficial to do it this way than being around a group of people from other districts that I don’t work with on an everyday basis. So, I thought we were able to talk about more relevant subjects.” A candidate observed, “And we also became invested in their lives, I feel like. I mean, it’s not just you’re registering for classes online and you don’t really know anybody in there. Over the course of a year and a half, we’ve all kind of got to know each other in some capacity and we want to help each other succeed. And we know we’re going to be with each other next semester, in the next course.”

Discussion

It was no surprise that candidates and alumni found the field experiences and projects relevant as they were developed around the specific needs of their school districts; however, it was notable how many of the candidates and alumni also reported that they enjoyed this work. Wang, Gates, Herman, Mean, Perera, Tsai, Whipkey, & Andrew (2018) found that experiential and project-based learning were more “worthwhile” to the candidate (p. 30), citing projects aimed at school improvement, instructional leadership, and balancing the budget as examples. It could be that this perception of worthwhileness of the experiences led to feelings of enjoyment of the experiences themselves for the candidates in the program. In a study focused on the university classroom environment and creating communities of practice, Kapucu (2012) found that field-based experiences were ... the most

enjoyable segments of the class for students and contributed the most to their learning” (p. 604).

The candidates also reported feeling prepared with the dispositions needed to be servant leaders in their schools. This is in fact a goal of the program, the School of Education, and the university as a whole. Dispositions and content for the program are taught through the lens of leading by serving all stakeholders in the schools. Allen, Harper, and Koschoreck (2017), found that in a principal preparation program, dispositions can be influenced and even changed through a single course. In the GYO programs for the current study, servant leadership is the lens through which all instruction and assessment of content knowledge, skill, and dispositions occur.

Kapucu (2012) identified collaboration and learning as “mutually reinforcing phenomena” (p. 605). The collaborative action research projects and district specific location of the GYO programs contributed to not only feelings of camaraderie and belongingness, they also led to dynamic learning and creative problem solving.

Study Limitations

Although 32 of the 37 candidates (86%) have participated in the GYO program and 4 of the 7 adjunct instructors (57%) joined in the study, the small number of individuals from which data could be collected is a limitation of the study. An additional limitation of the study is the dearth of previous studies about GYO programs to provide methodological direction and guidance regarding gaps in the literature in need of exploration. Lastly, the researchers have spent much time in the development and execution of the GYO program. This could have led to researcher bias.

The authors are presently in the process of further researching our newest GYO cohorts, expanding our interview questions and recording process. We invite other institutions to consider exploring the GYO model—as it aligns well with the most recent Wallace Foundation/Rand findings (which strongly support university/P-12 partnerships in training aspiring school principals).

We will also be in discussions with a neighboring state school, as it was a part of the seven-school consortium the Wallace Foundation funded and Rand studied in its research of university/P-12 principal preparation partnerships. As a result of that funding, we are a part of our state’s University Principal Preparation Initiative.

Implications

In moving forward, further research on the Grow Your Own model is needed, with more university/school district partnerships exploring the concept. And, such partnerships are wise to take a closer look at the GYO template’s array of possibilities, which include:

- Hybrid, face to face, and online study
- Increased utilization of guest lecturer expertise
- Multi-district GYO cohorts
- Regional GYO cohorts
- Increased alignment with clinical internship experiences
- Utilizing the small group culture to increase attention on leadership dispositions
- New principal induction and mentoring via the GYO framework

Conclusion

In training aspiring school principals, university/school district partnerships offer

much promise in better preparing the current and next generation of school leaders. Authentic project-driven course work, abundance of clinical experiences in the P-12 setting, personable and collegial partnership with cohort members within the school district, a dispositional bent focused on growing leaders and organizational health with an emphasis on a culture of care and effective school improvement, weekly access

to the expertise of current school leaders within the district, and access to university instructors who have served as past P-12 administrators create a learning community rich in depth of knowledge and leadership development--both through scholarship and the practitioner lens.

Author Biographies

Lisa Allen is the dean and a professor in the Campbellsville University School of Education. A former English teacher and school counselor, she also holds certification in Instructional Supervision. E-mail: lsallen@campbellsville.edu

Joseph Wallace is an associate professor at Campbellsville University and publishes about servant leadership. A former school principal, he also worked with new principals in the Kentucky Department of Education Highly Skilled Educator program. E-mail: jfwallace@campbellsville.edu

Franklin Thomas is the assistant chair of the graduate program and an assistant professor at Campbellsville University. Previously he held several administrator positions including principal and instructional supervisor. E-mail: fbthomas@campbellsville.edu

References

- Allen, J.G., Harper, R.E., & Koschoreck, J.W. (2017). Social justice and school leadership preparation: Can we shift beliefs, values, and commitments? *NCPEA International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 12(1), 1-20.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1145455.pdf>
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE.
- Dodson, R.L. (2015). What makes them the best? An analysis of the relationship between state education quality and principal preparation practices. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 10(7), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.22230/ijep.2015v10n7a634>
- Gill, J. (2012). Strength training: Aspiring principals need fortified programs to prepare them for the challenges they face. *Journal of Staff Development*, 33(6), 24–27.
- Gray, J. A. (2018). Leadership coaching and mentoring: A research-based model for stronger relationships. *International Journal of Educational Policy & Leadership*, 13(12).
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1200706.pdf>
- Gumus, E. (2015). Investigation regarding the pre-service trainings of primary and middle school principals in the United States: The case of the State of Michigan. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 15(1), 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2015.1.2052>
- Herman, R., Wang, E.L., Woo, A., Gates, S.M., Berglund, T., Schweig, J., Andrew, M., & Ivy, T. (2022). Redesigning university principal preparation programs: A systemic approach for change and sustainability. *Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation*.
- Horner, M., & Jordan, D.D. (2020). The partnership imperative for preparing effective principals in North Carolina schools. *Journal of Organizational and Educational Leadership*, 5(2).
- Kapucu, N. (2012). Classrooms as communities of practice: Designing and facilitating learning in a networked environment. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 18(3), 585-610.
- Lemoine, P.A., McCormack, T. J., & Richardson, M.D. (2018). Planning strategies to fill principal vacancies: The issues and some choices. *Educational Planning*, 25(1), p. 17-28.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1207965>
- Muñiz, J. (2020). Investing in grow your own teacher programs: Leveraging state-level competitive grants to promote quality. *New America*, 1-40.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED609158.pdf>

- Sanchez, J. E., Burnham, M. M., & Zaki, S. (2019). The dynamic transformation of a principal preparation program: A university-district collaborative. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 14(1), 1–12.
- Sutcher, L., Podolsky, A., & Espinoza, D. (2017). *Supporting principals' learning: Key features of effective programs*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- Wang, E.L., Gates, S.M., Herman, R., Mean, M., Perera, R., Tsai, T., Whipkey, K., & Andrew, M. (2018). *Launching a redesign of university principal preparation programs: Partners collaborate for change*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

PreK-12 Is the New Reality: How Do We Make It Work?

Deborah Stipek, PhD
Emeritus Professor
Graduate School of Education
Stanford University
Stanford, CA

Cynthia Coburn, PhD
Professor
School of Education and Social Policy,
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL

Abstract

Based on an in-depth longitudinal study of two districts endeavoring to create continuity between preschool and elementary school we offer a framework for ensuring the long-term benefits of investment in preschool and improving student learning in the early grades.

Key Words: preschool; P-3 coherence; assessment; curriculum; professional development; district reform

Preschool attendance is now the norm, and preschool is increasingly built into K-12 school systems. In many respects, as kindergarten has become the new first grade, preschool is becoming the new kindergarten.

In this article, we draw on our four-year study of school district efforts to create more seamless pathways from preschool to elementary school. We offer a framework based on this and others' research for considering strategies to ensure the long-term benefits of investment in preschool and to improve student learning in the early grades.

There are good reasons for the expansion of preschool. High-quality preschool can help K-12 districts and schools be more effective overall and reduce the achievement gap which is typically substantial before children enter kindergarten (Reardon, 2013).

Second, we know from neuroscience that there is substantial growth in brain functioning during the first five years. This growth, which is significantly affected by children's experiences, creates the foundation for later learning (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007).

Third, there is ample evidence that high-quality preschool experiences, especially if followed by high-quality instruction in kindergarten and the early elementary grades, have long-term positive effects on students' success in school (Yoshikawa et al., 2013).

Preschool ecology is complex and fragmented, with children often coming to kindergarten from many different kinds of preschool or with no preschool experience at all. Increasingly, however, preschool is part of the district system, overseen by district staff and under the elementary school principal's

leadership. District and school-level administrators throughout the U.S. are trying to figure out how to incorporate preschool productively and seamlessly into a system which until recently started with kindergarten.

There is no clear roadmap for how to incorporate preschool into district and elementary schools in terms of organization, staffing, curriculum, assessment, and so on. Much is written encouraging districts to embrace preschool and create continuity between preschool and third grade (Kauerz, 2006; Kauerz, Ballard, Soli, & Hagerman, 2021). But there is little research on how best to optimize the benefits of preschool as children progress through the elementary grades.

Ultimately what matters is providing children with a continuous educational experience in which each grade builds on what was learned in the previous grade, maximizing and sustaining the gains made in preschool to achieve better developmental and learning outcomes overall.

To achieve this, skills taught in each grade must help children move toward the next step in achieving academic standards. Instruction is targeted just beyond students' skill levels using similar pedagogical approaches adjusted to be developmentally appropriate. Children are given opportunities to broaden and deepen the skills they learned in the previous grade by applying them in novel and diverse contexts. This is what we mean by instructional continuity across grade levels.

Note that continuity in instruction can be achieved by implementing similar but ineffective instructional strategies throughout the grades. Thus, while seeking greater continuity in instruction, attention needs to be given to the quality and effectiveness of the

instruction as well as how continuous it is across grades.

While the interactions between teachers and students within the classroom are what matter most, these are affected by myriad school and district policies and practices. Researchers have identified five elements that district leaders need to consider in their efforts to support effective instruction (Hopkins & Spillane, 2015; Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015).

Our own research on P-3 continuity revealed that these same five components, plus an additional one that is specifically relevant to preschool (school leader learning), are critical to an aligned and continuous system that maximizes children’s learning and development.

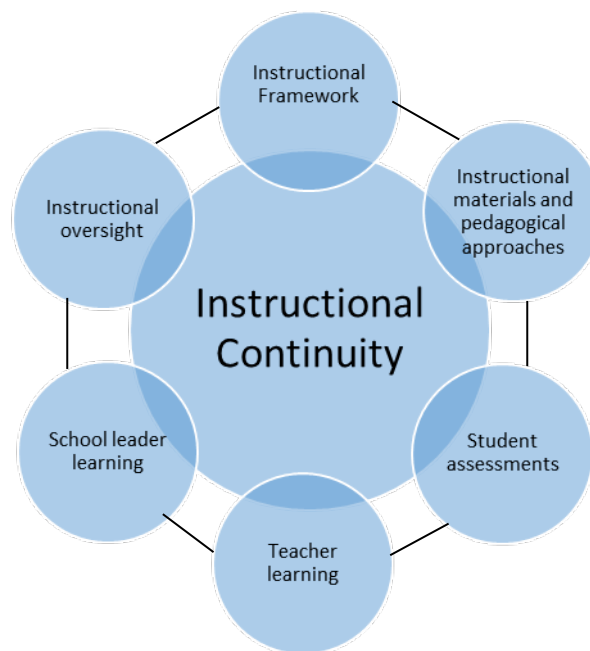
These elements serve as a framework, depicted below (figure 1), for reviewing

practices and policies designed to achieve effectiveness and continuity. The lines connecting the elements denote the need for each element to be aligned with the other elements. While all these elements are essential, the specific strategies used in each to achieve continuity are likely to vary, depending on state policies, the size of the district, resources, students served, and many other factors.

There is, therefore, no manual for this work. But the framework can guide conversations, informed by the local context. Because policies and practices interact to form a package, it is necessary to look both at the specific elements of the framework and at their connections to each other. It is the whole package—the way various policies and practices are aligned and reinforce each other—that matters. Next, we explain each of the elements.

Figure 1

Elements of a System to Support Instructional Continuity Across Grades



The first element is *instructional framework*. Instructional frameworks provide a vision for specific subject areas and guidance on what to teach and how to teach. Some districts rely on state standards and mandates; others develop their own or elaborate on the state standards. To guide how teachers teach, one district we studied created instructional practice guides aligned with the Common Core Standards---an observation tool that specifies core mathematical practices across grade levels. This tool was useful in getting district and school leaders aligned with each other, and between administrators and teachers across grade levels. Another created what they called the Math Teaching Toolkit, which was also about pedagogical approaches.

Typically, school districts' instructional frameworks apply only to K-12 but not to preschool. Extending the framework applied in the early elementary grades to preschool can improve instructional continuity. Many practices that are appropriate for older children need to be adapted for young children, so care is needed to ensure developmental appropriateness.

In some cases, frameworks that apply to preschool might be extended upward into the elementary grades. For example, self-regulation and social emotional development are typically central to preschool standards, but often overlooked in the elementary grades. This disconnect occurs despite evidence that many children in the early elementary grades could benefit, both academically and socially, from greater attention to these dimensions of their development.

For example, classroom norms and practices that are similar across grades can facilitate classroom management. In one school the teacher raised her hand when she wanted children's attention. When children saw the

teacher's hand up, they raised their own, making it easy for all children to become aware of the need to become quiet and face the teacher. Preschool children who had learned this practice had no need to be taught and adapt to a new practice in kindergarten.

Instructional materials and pedagogical approaches constitute the second element. Continuity in instructional materials is difficult to achieve because few commercially available curricula cover both preschool and elementary grades. Even if different curricula are used, however, they can be selected with a close eye toward their connections and the pedagogical approaches they promote. The kindergarten curriculum, for example, should build on the content of the preschool curriculum, using similar teaching strategies.

The curriculum provides guidance on the scope and sequence of skills. But how teachers implement the curriculum is at least as, if not more, important than the curriculum used. Instructional continuity requires a great deal of attention to the quality and consistency of pedagogical practices. Consistency in practice does not mean that the exact same strategies are used in every grade. The same pedagogical approach may look quite different depending on students' ages and skills. For example, while third graders might be able to verbally explain how they solved a math problem, younger children may need to explain by manipulating objects or drawing a picture.

The general principle of having children explain their reasoning can apply across grades but adjusted to be age appropriate. Similarly, third graders may discuss a story they read themselves while preschoolers discuss a story that was read to them. The purposes and activity are similar but adjusted to be appropriate to their respective skill levels. Being consistent with practice contributes to

children's learning because they don't have to learn a whole new way of doing math or learning to read when they move from grade to grade. If the practices reflect what is known to be effective instruction, using them continuously will also boost children's learning.

Student assessments are the third element of the framework. The most important student assessment for guiding instruction is embedded in teaching. Teachers pay attention to what children understand and have mastered as they engage in instructional activities with them and they make appropriate adjustments to instruction in the moment. Some teachers keep a written record of what they observe. To make sure they have an accurate assessment of all children, they may give more systematic formative assessments at the end of a unit or time spent on a particular set of skills. These assessments need to be closely linked to the curriculum and can be used to guide instructional next steps for some or all children.

A second purpose of student assessment is to provide information to schools and districts about student progress toward meeting standards. These assessments can be used to assess the effectiveness of new policies and practices and to guide decisions about teacher professional development. Some districts aggregate the formative assessments teachers give to track overall progress and progress by different groups of students. More often, assessments directly aligned with standards are given two or more times over the course of the year.

Many states do not require student assessments until third grade, but most states and districts use some form of assessments before then. In our work with districts, we find that the preschool assessment is rarely continuous with what is used in kindergarten,

and few commercially available assessments span preschool and the early elementary grades. Continuity of assessments that track student progress between preschool and the early grades can help districts determine whether the policies they have implemented are working effectively to support children's progress and reduce the achievement gap.

Ensuring continuity of assessments across grades has the added value of providing useful information on whether children are on track to meet expectations in the next grade or whether additional support needs to be provided. Given the typically wide span of skill levels in any grade, there should be some assessment overlap from the previous and subsequent grades. Ideally, assessment instruments are continuous, showing where children are on their learning trajectory regardless of their grade.

Assessments are only useful if they are made available to the people whose decisions they can inform, whether at the district, school, or classroom level. For example, kindergarten teachers can use evidence on the skill levels of the children entering their class to plan initial instruction—to make sure that it builds on rather than repeats what children have already learned. Principals can use the information to determine whether specific resources will be needed to address the needs of particular children entering kindergarten.

The fourth element of the framework is the *system for teacher learning*. This includes professional learning programs and coaching, as well as opportunities for teachers to meet and learn with one another in professional learning communities. In general, preschool teachers are offered fewer professional learning opportunities than teachers of older children, despite their critical role in creating the foundation for children's future learning.

Including teachers from preschool and the early elementary grades in the same professional learning or having the same coach work with both groups can contribute substantially to instructional continuity while providing preschool teachers opportunities to develop their skills.

Teachers also benefit from meeting with each other across the grades. Preschool teachers need to understand the educational program for which they are preparing children and kindergarten teachers need to know what children are taught before they come to their classrooms.

Research based on a national representative sample revealed that kindergarten teachers often repeat instruction on skills that children had already mastered before entering kindergarten (Engel, Claessens, & Finch, 2013).

Further research showed that the more that teachers repeated content, the less children learned in kindergarten (Engel et al., 2016). This is a likely reason that studies often show “fade-out” in the effects of preschool; the advantage of preschool compared to children who did not have preschool fade over the first few years of elementary school. If children repeat in kindergarten what children learned in preschool rather than help them continue to develop their skills, children who did not have the advantage of preschool catch up. A better understanding of the preschool instructional program would help kindergarten teachers build on skills that children mastered.

Another reason for teachers meeting across grade levels is that the span of children’s skill levels that teachers of different grades have in their classrooms is highly overlapping. Preschool teachers may have some children in their classroom who are sufficiently advanced

in their learning to begin working on kindergarten-level skills.

For preschool teachers to support children’s continued development, they need to be familiar with the kindergarten standards and curriculum. Likewise, kindergarten teachers are likely to have some children in their classroom who have not mastered all the skills expected of preschoolers. They need to know how to provide these children with developmentally appropriate instruction.

For logistical reasons, it is often difficult for preschool teachers to meet with elementary grade teachers, and there are other common obstacles, such as differences in training, credentials, and pay that make collegial connections difficult (Koppich & Stipek, 2020; Stein & Coburn, 2021). Although not easy, there is considerable value to making efforts to bridge this divide.

The fifth element of the instructional guidance infrastructure is *school leader learning*. Principals do not typically attend district or other workshops offered to teachers on instruction.

Without substantial knowledge of what teachers are attempting to do, it’s difficult for leaders to support and reinforce teachers for their efforts. Indeed, what teachers are learning in professional learning programs or from coaches is occasionally contradicted by school leaders, creating teacher frustration and confusion rather than instructional coherence. Principals and other school leaders clearly need to be deeply involved in any effort to improve teaching.

To take full advantage of preschool, school leaders need to learn how to support the preschool classrooms at their school site. A study of 25 districts in California revealed that

principals typically limited their role to administrative or operational oversight because they lacked requisite knowledge about early childhood education (Koppich & Stipek, 2020).

Preschool is neither part of principals' administrative training nor necessarily included in their district-offered professional growth and development. As a result, principals often defer to the teachers themselves or external learning opportunities rather than support them directly in developing more effective instruction that is continuous with kindergarten.

In our study of two districts' efforts to create better alignment between preschool and K-3, elementary school principals in both districts formally supervised the preschools on their campuses.

In one district, principals were given the option of some training in early childhood education, which few availed themselves of, in part because their direct supervisor was not reinforcing the superintendent's emphasis on P-3 coherence.

In the other district, all the principals attended an institute on early childhood education developed by the district, followed up by classroom visits that district leaders also attended.

In the former district, principal interviews revealed low confidence in their ability to provide meaningful supervision and support, and some resentment of having to take on the additional work of preschools; they engaged with preschool mainly around operational issues (e.g., compliance paperwork, IEPs).

In the district where school leaders received consistent messages about the value of preschool and training and support in early

childhood education, principals were more likely to value preschool, express a strong sense of responsibility for its success, and engage instructionally with the preschool classrooms.

The final element of the instructional guidance infrastructure is *instructional oversight*. Instructional oversight is the way that districts monitor instruction and learning in classrooms.

It includes practices such as instructional walkthroughs, routines for analyzing data on student performance, and teacher and school leader evaluations.

Combining preschool with the elementary grades in these processes provides information on the connections between the two.

When district leaders do walkthroughs, for example, they can examine instructional continuity across grades. Preschool can also be included in examinations of data on student learning, teacher turnover, or other indicators of the effectiveness of district, school, and classroom practices.

No amount of information or data or analysis at the district level is useful if it is not conveyed to teachers along with support to help them understand the implications for their practice.

Learning that their teaching is not consistent with the district's instructional guidance may not affect their teaching without assistance in making the appropriate changes.

Learning that a large proportion of their children are far behind grade level in February can demoralize rather than motivate teachers who are not given opportunities to develop the

tools they need to be more effective. Instructional oversight is important, but only as a tool to identify teacher learning needs.

Efforts to productively incorporate preschool into elementary schools and create instructional continuity also raise questions about the organization of district leaders—the people who have responsibility for instructional oversight.

If the director of early learning is not part of the leadership team that meets regularly, that person is not likely to be well informed of issues, policies, and practices that might be relevant to preschool, and does not have a regular opportunity to inform K-12 leaders of issues related to preschool. Making the person who is responsible for preschool an integral member of the leadership team also sends a clear message that preschool is a central part of a continuous educational program.

Aligning the Elements

While examining the ways in which preschool is incorporated into practices related to each of the elements in the framework, care needs to be taken to ensure that practices *across* elements reinforce each other.

Clearly assessment instruments need to be aligned directly with both the curriculum and the standards. The curriculum needs to be consistent with the instructional framework. Instructional oversight needs to include assessment of how well pedagogical practices reflect the instructional framework, and so on.

Specific practices can also be designed to be synergistic. In one district we studied

district and school leaders used the instructional framework to guide their walkthroughs, which included preschool. They collected data during their walkthroughs that they used to plan teacher professional development. Another district created formative assessments that were embedded in the curriculum to inform teacher practice. They also aggregated the assessment data to use to track student progress and assess district policies and practices.

Conclusions

The framework we offer does not provide a manual for improving continuity between preschool and the elementary grades. Instead, it suggests issues that school and district administrators who want to invest in preschool and ensure its long-term benefits need to address to meet their goals.

The actual strategies that districts and schools use will vary substantially. By monitoring the effects of district policies on teaching and learning, policies can be fine-tuned to have maximum benefit.

Integrating preschool into elementary school should not involve simply pushing down the elementary curriculum and teaching approaches into preschool, as many advocates of early childhood education fear.

It is an opportunity to provide a developmentally appropriate educational program for children throughout the early grades, lay a strong foundation for learning, and sustain the social emotional and academic gains children make in preschool.

Author Biographies

Deborah Stipek is emeritus professor and former dean of the graduate school of education at Stanford University. She currently works with California districts to improve preschool-grade 3 alignment. She served as director of the UCLA Elementary Lab School for 10 years. E-mail: stipek@stanford.edu

Cynthia Coburn is a professor in the school of education and social policy at Northwestern University. She studies the relationship between instructional policy and teachers' practices, school district policy making, and the relationship between research and practice for school improvement. E-mail: cynthia.coburn@northwestern.edu

References

- Engel, M., Claessens, A., & Finch, M. (2013). Teaching students what they already know. The (mis)alignment between mathematics instructional content and student knowledge in kindergarten. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 35(2), 157–178.
- Engel, M., Claessens, A., Watts, T., & Farkas, G. (2016). Mathematics content coverage and student learning in kindergarten. *Educational Researcher*, 45(5) 293–300.
- Hopkins, M. & Spillane, J. P. (2015). Reconceptualizing relations between instructional guidance infrastructure (IGI) and teachers’ beliefs about mathematics instruction: Regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive considerations. *Journal of Educational Change*, 16, 421-450.
- Kauerz, K. (2006). Ladders of learning: Fighting fade-out by advancing PK-3 alignment. New America Foundation Early Education Initiative, Issue Brief No. 3.
- Kauerz, K., Ballard, R., Soli, M., & Hagerman, S. (2021). Leading learning communities: A principal’s guide to early learning and the early grades (Pre-K–3rd Grade). Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals.
- Koppich, J., & Stipek, D. (2020). PreK–3 alignment: Challenges and Opportunities. California Policy Analysis for California Education: Stanford University.
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007). *The Timing and Quality of Early Experiences Combine to Shape Brain Architecture: Working Paper No. 5*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.
- Reardon, S. (2013). The widening income achievement gap. *Educational Leadership*, 70 (8), 10-16.
- Stein, M. A. & Coburn, C. E. (2021). PreK – 3 initiatives: Challenges of fostering alignment and continuity in two school districts. *Educational Policy*.
- Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C. Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L. Gormley, W., Ludwig, J., Magnuson, K., Phillips, D., & Zaslow, M. (2013). Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education. Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development.

Mission and Scope, Copyright, Privacy, Ethics, Upcoming Themes, Author Guidelines, Submissions, Publication Rates & Publication Timeline

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is a refereed, blind-reviewed, quarterly journal with a focus on research and evidence-based practice that advance the profession of education administration.

Mission and Scope

The **mission** of the Journal is to provide peer-reviewed, user-friendly, and methodologically sound research that practicing school and district administrations can use to take action and that higher education faculty can use to prepare future school and district administrators. The Journal publishes accepted manuscripts in the following categories: (1) Evidence-based Practice, (2) Original Research, (3) Research-informed Commentary, and (4) Book Reviews.

The **scope** for submissions focuses on the intersection of five factors of school and district administration: (a) administrators, (b) teachers, (c) students, (d) subject matter, and (e) settings. The Journal encourages submissions that focus on the intersection of factors a-e. The Journal discourages submissions that focus only on personal reflections and opinions.

Copyright

Articles published electronically by AASA, The School Superintendents Association in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* fall under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-NoDerivs 3.0 license policy (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). Please refer to the policy for rules about republishing, distribution, etc. In most cases our readers can copy, post, and distribute articles that appear in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, but the works must be attributed to the author(s) and the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*. Works can only be distributed for non-commercial/non-monetary purposes. Alteration to the appearance or content of any articles used is not allowed. Readers who are unsure whether their intended uses might violate the policy should get permission from the author or the editor of the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

Authors please note: By submitting a manuscript the author/s acknowledge that the submitted manuscript is not under review by any other publisher or society, and the manuscript represents original work completed by the authors and not previously published as per professional ethics based on APA guidelines, most recent edition. By submitting a manuscript, authors agree to transfer without charge the following rights to AASA, its publications, and especially the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* upon acceptance of the manuscript. The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is indexed by several services and is also a member of the Directory of Open Access Journals. This means there is worldwide access to all content. Authors must agree to first worldwide serial publication rights and the right for the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* and AASA to grant permissions for use of works as the editors judge appropriate for the redistribution, repackaging, and/or marketing of all works and any metadata associated with the works in professional indexing and reference services. Any revenues received by AASA and the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* from redistribution are used to support the continued marketing, publication, and distribution of articles.

Privacy

The names and e-mail addresses entered in this journal site will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal and will not be made available for any other purpose or to any other party. Please note that the journal is available, via the Internet at no cost, to audiences around the world. Authors' names and e-mail addresses are posted for each article. Authors who agree to have their manuscripts published in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* agree to have their names and e-mail addresses posted on their articles for public viewing.

Ethics

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* uses a double-blind peer-review process to maintain scientific integrity of its published materials. Peer-reviewed articles are one hallmark of the scientific method and the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* believes in the importance of maintaining the integrity of the scientific process in order to bring high quality literature to the education leadership community. We expect our authors to follow the same ethical guidelines. We refer readers to the latest edition of the APA Style Guide to review the ethical expectations for publication in a scholarly journal.

Themes and Topics of Interest

Below are themes and areas of interest for publication cycles.

1. Governance, Funding, and Control of Public Education
2. Federal Education Policy and the Future of Public Education
3. Federal, State, and Local Governmental Relationships
4. Teacher Quality (e.g. hiring, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of teachers)
5. School Administrator Quality (e.g. hiring, preparation, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of principals and other school administrators)
6. Data and Information Systems (for both summative and formative evaluative purposes)
7. Charter Schools and Other Alternatives to Public Schools
8. Turning Around Low-Performing Schools and Districts
9. Large Scale Assessment Policy and Programs
10. Curriculum and Instruction
11. School Reform Policies
12. Financial Issues

Submissions

Length of manuscripts should be as follows: Research and evidence-based practice articles between **2,800** and **4,800** words; commentaries between **1,600** and **3,800** words; book and media reviews between **400** and **800** words. Articles, commentaries, book and media reviews, citations and references are to follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, **latest edition**. Permission to use previously copyrighted materials is the responsibility of the author, not the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

Cover page checklist:

1. title of the article:
identify if the submission is original research, evidence-based practice, commentary, or book review
2. contributor name(s)
3. terminal degree
4. academic rank
5. department
6. college or university
7. city, state
8. telephone and fax numbers
9. e-mail address
10. 120-word abstract that conforms to APA style
11. six to eight key words that reflect the essence of the submission
12. 40-word biographical sketch

Please do not submit page numbers in headers or footers. Rather than use footnotes, it is preferred authors embed footnote content in the body of the article. Also note, **APA guidelines are changed so that one space is required after the period at the end of a sentence.** Articles are to be submitted to the editor by e-mail as an electronic attachment in Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, 12 Font.

Acceptance Rates

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* maintains of record of acceptance rates for each of the quarterly issues published annually. The percentage of acceptance rates since 2010 is as follows:

2012: 22%	2016: 19%	2020: 18%
2013: 15%	2017: 20%	2021: 17%
2014: 20%	2018: 19%	2022: 17%
2015: 22%	2019: 19%	

Book Review Guidelines

Book review guidelines should adhere to the author guidelines as found above. The format of the book review is to include the following:

- Full title of book
- Author
- Publisher, city, state, year, # of pages, price
- Name and affiliation of reviewer
- Contact information for reviewer: address, city, state, zip code, e-mail address, telephone and fax
- Reviewer biography
- Date of submission

Publication Timeline

Issue	Deadline to Submit Articles	Notification to Authors of Editorial Review Board Decisions	To AASA for Formatting and Editing	Issue Available on AASA website
Spring	October 1	January 1	February 15	April 1
Summer	February 1	April 1	May 15	July 1
Fall	May 1	July 1	August 15	October 1
Winter	August 1	October 1	November 15	January 15

Additional Information

Contributors will be notified of editorial board decisions within eight weeks of receipt of papers at the editorial office. Articles to be returned must be accompanied by a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope.

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* reserves the right to make minor editorial changes without seeking approval from contributors.

Materials published in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* do not constitute endorsement of the content or conclusions presented.

The Journal is listed in Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities. Articles are also archived in the ERIC collection. The Journal is available on the Internet and considered an open access document.

Editor

Kenneth Mitchell, EdD

AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice

Submit articles electronically: kenneth.mitchell@mville.edu

To contact by postal mail:

Dr. Ken Mitchell
Associate Professor
School of Education
Manhattanville College
2900 Purchase Street
Purchase, NY 1057

AASA Resources

➔ New and Revised Resources and Events

- **CHECK IT OUT! NEW AASA WEBSITE** <http://www.aasa.org>

- **AASA Launches ‘Live Well. Lead Well.’ Campaign: Initiative to Focus on Mental, Physical & Emotional Health of School System Leaders**
 “We at AASA recognize that school system leaders need our support now more than ever before,” said Daniel A. Domenech, executive director. For more information about the *Live Well. Lead Well.* campaign, visit the AASA website: www.connect.aasa.org/livewellleadwell

- **AASA Learning 2025 Learner-Centered, Equity-Focused, Future-Driven Education Initiative Underway**
 Comprised of school system leaders and business and non-profit leaders, AASA’s Learning 2025 Commission was chaired by Daniel A. Domenech, executive director of AASA and Bill Daggett, founder of the Successful Practices Network. A network of educational systems now comprises a Learning 2025 National Network of Demonstrations Systems, whose chief objective is to prepare all students safely and equitably for a workplace and society for the future.

 For additional information about **Learning 2025 Network for Student-Centered, Equity-Focused Education**, visit the AASA website www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=45826 or contact Mort Sherman at msherman@aasa.org, Valerie Truesdale at vtruesdale@aasa.org or Debbie Magee, program director, at dmagee@aasa.org.

- **AASA’s Leadership Network** the School Superintendents Association’s professional learning arm, drives educational leaders’ success, innovation and growth, focused on student-centered, equity-focused, forward-reaching education. Passionate and committed to continuous improvement, over 100 Leadership Network faculty connect educational leaders to the leadership development, relationships and partnerships needed to ensure individual growth and collective impact. A snapshot of over 30 academies, cohorts and consortia is represented in the graphic below. To assist in navigating through the pandemic, AASA has produced and archived over 100 webinars since March 2020 on *Leading for Equity* and *What Works* at aasa.org/AASA-LeadershipNetwork-webinars.aspx. Contact Mort Sherman at msherman@aasa.org or Valerie Truesdale at vtruesdale@aasa.org to explore professional learning and engagement.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	AASA National Superintendent Certification Program®	DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	AASA Learning 2025 Network
	AASA National Superintendent Certification Program® States		Advancing Rural Education Cohort
	Aspiring Superintendents Academy®		Authentic Family Engagement Certification Program & Summit
	Aspiring Superintendents Academy® Female Leaders		Early Learning Cohort
	Aspiring Superintendents Academy® Hybrid Learning		Eastern States Consortium
	Aspiring Superintendents Academy® Latino and Latina Leaders		Equity in Action Cohort
	Aspiring Superintendents Academy® State Collaboratives (AZ, MT, MN, OH and others)		Innovative Districts Empowering All Learners (IDEAL) Cohort
	Leadership Academy for Black Educators		Large Countywide Suburban District Collaborative
	National Aspiring Principal Academy in collaboration with NAESP		Leadership in School Communication in partnership with NSPRA
	National Instructional Leader Academy in partnership with AVID		Mental Health Cohort
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS	Building Resilience & Positive Youth Development	National Principal Supervisor Academy in partnership with CEL	
	Engage Every Student	National Women's Leadership Consortium	
	Family Engagement in collaboration with National PTA	Next Education Workforce in partnership with ASU	
	#PowerOfPartnerships	Newly Appointed Superintendents	
	School Safety in collaboration with University of Michigan	Redefining Ready! Cohort	
		Social Emotional Learning Cohort	
		STEM Leadership Consortia	
		Transformational Leadership Consortium	

To ensure each child has access to equitable, rigorous, and relevant educational opportunities, the AASA Leadership Network is committed to supporting a pipeline of diverse school superintendents and educational leaders as they refine the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for highly effective leadership.

- **Advocacy Updates: Congress Nears Final FY23 Appropriations Package**
<https://www.aasa.org/advocacy/blog/congress-nears-final-fy23-appropriations-package>

- **National Conference on Education: Feb 15-17, 2024, San Diego, California**
<https://nce.aasa.org/>

- **Podcast: Beyond Self Care: Disconnect to Reconnect**
<https://www.aasa.org/news-media/media/beyond-self-care-disconnect-to-reconnect>

- **Webinar Recordings: A to Z: Getting Started with Electric School Bus Purchasing**
<https://www.aasa.org/resources/resource/a-to-z-getting-started-with-electric-school-bus-purchasing>

- **School Administrator: Measurements in Education**
<https://www.aasa.org/publications/publication/january-2023-school-administrator>

➤ **Upcoming Program and Events**

<https://www.aasa.org/professional-learning/calendar-of-events>

- **School District Spending of American Rescue Plan Funding**, an AASA survey of hundreds of district leaders across the U.S. in July (2021) about their plans to utilize American Rescue Plan (ARP) and other federal COVID-19 relief funding to address the pandemic-related student learning recovery. Results: www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/ARP-Survey-Findings-090121.pdf

➤ **Resources on leading through COVID**

COVID Guidance, Strategies, and Resources.

www.aasacentral.org/covidguidance/

- **AASA Releases 2022-23 Superintendent Salary Study** [for members only](#)

www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=45378

➤ **Official Online Industry Suppliers for Educators**

aasa.inloop.com/en/buyersguide

➤ **AASA Main and Advocacy App**

Both apps are designed for school superintendents, central office staff, principals, teachers, policymakers, business and community leaders, parents and more. The Advocacy app enables advocates of public education to connect, network, communicate with other members, access, and share important information directly from their devices.

www.aasa.org/app.aspx

➤ **Superintendent's Career Center**

aasa-jobs.careerwebsite.com/

➤ **2020 Decennial Study of the American Superintendent**

www.aasacentral.org/book/the-american-superintendent-2020-decennial-study

The study is for sale and available at www.aasacentral.org/aasa-books

- ❖ **Join AASA** and discover a number of resources reserved exclusively for members. See Member Benefits at www.aasa.org/welcome/index.aspx. For questions on membership contact Meghan Moran at mmoran@aasa.org

❖ **Welcome materials may be found at**

www.aasa.org/welcome/resources.aspx

- ❖ **Resources for educational leaders** may be viewed at AASA's virtual library:

www.aasathoughtleadercentral.org

- ❖ Learn about AASA's **books program** where new titles and special discounts are

available to AASA members. The AASA publications catalog may be downloaded at www.aasacentral.org/aasa-books



Upcoming AASA Events

AASA Legislative Advocacy Conference, July 11-13, 2023, Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, WDC

AASA 2024 National Conference on Education, Feb. 15-17, 2024, San Diego, CA

Redefining Ready! Summit for College- Career-and Life-Readiness, October 16, 2023

<https://www.aasa.org/professional-learning/event/2023/10/16/default-calendar/redefining-ready-october>

STEM Leadership Consortium Meeting, November 1-3, 2023

<https://www.aasa.org/professional-learning/event/2023/11/01/default-calendar/stem-leadership-consortium-meeting-nov>

STEM Leadership Consortium Meeting, February 14, 2024

<https://www.aasa.org/professionallearning/event/2024/02/14/defaultcalendar/stem-leadership-consortium-meeting-nce24>