

Leadership Matters

February 2017



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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

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Message From the Executive Director

Hopeful and concerned sums up feelings about U.S. Secretary of Education nominee

Dr. Brent Clark

We've gotten a couple of media calls asking about our reaction to Betsy DeVos, nominee for U.S. Secretary of Education, whose Senate confirmation vote is expected any time now. The most succinct reply I can give to that question is that we are hopeful and concerned, not necessarily in that order.

I am hopeful because we, as an association, have long been a champion of local control of public schools and President Trump and DeVos both are on the record as saying the role of the federal government in education needs to be diminished. From where I sit, and where I used to sit as a superintendent, there is a glaring disconnect between the myriad of rules and standards Congress and the U.S. Department of Education mandate versus the level of financial support they provide.

The concern is based on several factors, not the least of which is the nominee to head up the nation's Department of Education has little to no practical knowledge of public schools as neither she nor any of her children ever have attended or taught in a public school. It's even more disturbing, though not surprising given her background, that DeVos is a huge advocate for vouchers and "school choice."

She helped push and finance the effort for school vouchers in Michigan, a program that has been a failure according to news reports from that state. In fact, busloads of parents from Detroit showed up in Washington, D.C. at her recent Senate confirmation hearing to oppose her nomination based on their experience with the voucher program and what it has done to public schools in that city.

DeVos' Senate confirmation hearing was pretty confrontational along partisan party lines, with Democrats grilling the nominee on a variety of topics. DeVos appeared to not be very knowledgeable about some of the hottest topics in education, having trouble differentiating between proficiency and student growth, one of the top public education debates in recent years and one of the reasons No Child Left Behind was guaranteed to fail. She also refused to say that all schools—public, private and parochial—that receive federal dollars should be held to the same accountability standards.

Under questioning from New Hampshire Democrat Senator Maggie Hassan, whose son has cerebral palsy, DeVos seemed surprised to learn that in Florida and some other states parents must sign away their child's rights under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in order to use vouchers. Hassan, who was elected governor of New Hampshire in 2012 and U.S. Senator last November, remarked that her son was able to graduate from a public high school only because the Disabilities Act required the school to accommodate her son's special needs. Still, DeVos declined to specifically promise Hassan that the Department of Education would enforce the IDEA laws for private and parochial schools that receive public funds.

One of the senators noted that 37 states have laws prohibiting public monies being used for parochial schools, but that door was cracked slightly open about 16 years ago in Illinois. A proposal to use \$12 million in state funds for parochial schools was defeated, but the compromise ended up allowing some funding for textbooks and transportation to go to private and parochial schools in Illinois. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that vouchers are legal because the money does not go directly to the parochial schools from the state, but instead that parents get the vouchers and decide to use them for a parochial school. The public monies are not supposed to be used for religious instruction, but that obviously is a very thin, difficult line to determine.

The use of publicly funded vouchers should be worrisome for any educator. The end result of shifting money from public schools very likely will be a further erosion of public schools with no evidence that given the same demographics charters or private schools perform any better than public schools. Common sense also leads me to believe that there will be more "school choice" options available to wealthier families because their resources can overcome issues such as



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Message From the Executive Director ...cont'd.

transportation and covering the difference between a voucher and the tuition for private or parochial schools.

DeVos talked during her hearing about how education policy needs to be updated, specifically mentioning online learning. There is no question that education must continually adapt to changes in the world to properly prepare the current generation for tomorrow's workplace. If correctly done, online learning can offer greater opportunities for schoolchildren in rural areas or in districts where there may not be as many resources as in other districts. We always will support those things that provide the best educational opportunities for all children.

The 21st Century Learning pillar of Vision 20/20 includes recommendations to provide high-speed Internet connectivity to every school and community by the state making investments in technology infrastructure to meet SETDA internet connection standards to ensure adequacy and equity. Infrastructure investments should be pursued through funding partnerships for both school and community Internet and for ISBE to incorporate state technology standards with the new Illinois Learning Standards in a meaningful manner.

A new look for Leadership Matters

We recently used one of our IASA vacancies to add a graphic artist, Marjorie Gladish, to our staff. One of Marjie's first projects was to give a facelift of sorts to

our award-winning monthly online newsletter *Leadership Matters*.

One of Marjie's first comments was "You really have more of a magazine than a newsletter." Some tweaking may still occur in the months ahead, but we think you will find the new look of our magazine to be clean and attractive in a way that will complement the content and enhance your reading experience. As always, we welcome your story ideas and suggestions.



Alliance Leadership Summit

The second biennial Alliance Leadership Summit is set for February 21-22 and there still is time to [register](#). The 2015 summit was a rousing success, thanks in part to a perfect storm of issues like pension reform and other issues of critical importance to public education.

Well, the pension reform issue is rearing its head again, and if anything, the challenges facing public schools are more urgent today than two years ago. If you have not registered to join us, please consider lending your voice to our efforts.

Brent Clark

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this training for any district looking to improve evaluation practices to better serve teachers.”

Dr. P.J. Caposey
Superintendent
Meridian CUSD 223



“Coaching Teacher Evaluators to Effectively Rate Teachers is an outstanding program for teacher evaluators at all levels! Danielson Framework was used to support professional dialogue

between evaluators and teachers to promote effective teaching in a comfortable environment for our team to take risks and improve their practice. The day provided our team with the skills and the confidence they need to promote teaching and learning in their departments as well as the added benefit of having all administrator hearing the same message on the same day. I would encourage all administrative evaluators to participate in this program—you will leave feeling energized by the work!”

Renee Zoladz, Ed. D.
Associate Superintendent of Instructional
and Personnel Services
Grayslake CHSD 127



“PBL has taken advantage of hosting various administrator academies on the topic of teacher evaluation. IASA presenters are well prepared,

experienced former practitioners, who are adaptable to district needs. It's imperative to the integrity of our evaluation process that all of our administrative staff receives the same high quality training. This allows us to reflect as a group and feel confident that we can insure a high degree of inter-rater reliability.”

Cliff McClure
Superintendent
Paxton-Buckley-Loda CUSD 10

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Your leader in professional development



State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith visits with schoolchildren on one of his visits to districts

State Superintendent hopes to build upon foundation of deeper relationships with districts

By Mike Chamness
IASA Director of Communications

When Dr. Tony Smith looks back on his first two years as Illinois State Superintendent, what is foremost on Smith's mind are the relationship building blocks he feels have been put in place.

"I'm proud of building a strong relationship with the State Board that is focused first on the well-being of kids," said Smith, who became Illinois schools chief in April of 2015. "Good schools are instrumental in creating healthy communities. Fair access to high-quality education is something every kid deserves.

"I'm also proud of building better and deeper relationships with individual districts and with private, public and philanthropic organizations. We are becoming more of an advocacy agency, speaking out for better funding and more equity."

Drawing on his own experiences as a school district superintendent, Smith is committed to ensuring superintendents have support they need to serve communities well.

"When I was a district superintendent, I had to be in great relationship with my principals. I understood their importance as agents of change and stability," he said. "What I learned was that I had to make our district's central office more of a service center for them. The same is true at ISBE for superintendents.

"Building relationships is a continuous process in which we must respond to the varied and changing needs of our districts. There are times when ISBE cannot waive a mandate or does not have the resources to fulfill every request. When that's the case, I want to say, 'I hear you, here is the context, and let's find another way to get you the support you need.'"

Going forward, Smith said he wants to use the working relationships he has been able to forge as a foundation upon which to build.

“If every year we give everything we’ve got, Illinois can become the first state where each and every student in our care consistently reaches their full potential.”

—State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith

He has set as one of his primary goals in 2017 to “move from a culture of competition to a culture of collaboration” among school districts.

“We’re building a multi-tiered system of support that includes school districts being able to help one another—with ISBE helping to facilitate those partnerships, instead of trying to be the ‘giant’ overseeing everything,” Smith said. A multiplier strategy is a characteristic of progressive management. At ISBE, it also might be a necessity. The agency charged with overseeing and supporting Illinois’ 855 school districts now has fewer than 400 employees, down from nearly 800 just 15 years ago.

Smith sees the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaces No Child Left Behind, as an opportunity for states to step up and take ownership of the shifts they want to see. Smith and his team have spent much time traveling around the state to get input for the ESSA State Plan. He wants students, teachers, and schools at the center.

“We’ve had close to 100 meetings,” he said. “We are approaching the State Plan from the standpoint of working to build a system that not only implements ESSA, but also supports school districts in meeting the ESSA standards. I’m excited that there are real conversations happening about growth—and a deeper recognition that not everybody is situated in the same way, that some are closer or further away from adequacy and equity.

“At the same time, I feel deeply that if a problem is predictable, we should be able to find a solution. We have to pay attention to the research and find a way to close the opportunity gap. I believe that will help us close the performance gap.”

When it comes to what he expects in terms of federal education policy changes with Donald Trump as President, Smith said only that he expects the states’ roles to be strengthened under ESSA.

“ESSA includes a deep belief in states having more leadership, and Senator (Lamar) Alexander has been a big proponent of that,” Smith said, referring to the Tennessee senator who chairs the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, the committee in charge of the rules for ESSA. “The letter of the law creates parameters for accountability. States have flexibility over the real ‘how’, and I think that is going to hold (under the new administration).”

“The process of building those relationships is perpetual. I want our agency to respond to changing needs, and I think we are getting better at that.”

—State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith

“School choice” is the term most often used when observers try to predict where the Trump team might head. Trump on the campaign trail talked about moving \$20 billion into a national

school voucher program. Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner also is a supporter of school choice and charter schools. Unlike U.S. Secretary of Education nominee Betsy DeVos, who has had no direct connection to public schools as a child or as a parent, Smith attended only public schools, taught and worked in public schools, and was superintendent of the Oakland and Emeryville (CA) public school systems before coming to Illinois.

“If people start from the position of being ‘for’ or ‘against’ charter schools, to me that’s the wrong approach. I am for every single kid having a quality education. There are some really, really amazing traditional public schools, and there are some really bad traditional

public schools. The same can be said of charters. I see ‘school choice’ as a conversation about access to quality.”

From Day One as State Superintendent, Smith identified the inequity of relying so heavily on local property taxes as the primary cause for the funding gap in Illinois, which ranks last or next to last in the percentage of school funding provided by the state. When state cuts come and increases do not, as has been the case in the past several years, districts that rely most on state funding are disproportionately affected. Smith is encouraged by the work being done by Governor Rauner’s Commission on School Funding Reform and others who are working to overhaul the outdated school funding formula for the first time in 20 years.

“Ideally, we start with what we want to be true for schools and work back from there. Where you put your money says a lot about your values. We believe in the possibility of every child. And I’m encouraged by members of the General Assembly learning together about what isn’t working and why we must come up with something reflects the value of every child,” said Smith, who has been sitting in on the commission meetings. “We have an opportunity to take research-based evidence, pieces of Vision 20/20, and other pieces and pull them together for a clearer map.

“It’s a very complex process, right? What is adequate and fair has to guide the process. We have a responsibility for the relationship between inputs and outcomes. Even the fiercest local control advocates understand that implementation matters, that results matter.”

Smith did not hazard a guess at what the end result of the ongoing school funding reform talks might be other than to

continued next page...



“One of our top goals for 2017 is to move from a culture of competition to a culture of collaboration among school districts. We’re trying to build a multi-tiered system of support that includes school districts being able to help one another—with ISBE helping to facilitate those partnerships instead of trying to be the ‘giant’ overseeing everything.”

—State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith, whose agency now has fewer than 400 employees, down from nearly 800 just 15 years ago

say he expects the commission’s working draft and framework to be the foundation of any new school funding plan.

“At the end of the day, the General Assembly makes the decision. It’s our only road forward. The fact that schools are primarily funded by local property taxes is not really on the table, so I believe the General Assembly members know something else big has to happen. I like to believe if people know better, they’ll do better, and the commission has been working hard to become informed.”

On the topic of PARCC and the SAT, Smith said he is most pleased that all students, including low-income students, will continue to have the opportunity to take a college entrance exam.

“We moved to this solution in response to concerns from the U.S. Department of Education,” he said, describing why ISBE replaced the PARCC tests at the high school level with the SAT. “We believe in giving all kids the chance to take a college entrance exam, and we believe in holding ourselves accountable for all kids leaving high school knowing and able to demonstrate mastery of our expectations. Expecting all kids to do all of that at the exact same time doesn’t make very much sense.”

As if the adequacy and equity issues aren’t enough, Smith acknowledged the current shortage of substitute teachers and a looming potential shortage of full-time teachers down

the road. He does not support lowering the standards for licensing, but he said he is open to being creative. ISBE worked with the Vision 20/20 coalition to help get Senate Bill 2912 signed into law to streamline the process by which a substitute teacher can get their license and also to provide licensure reciprocity with other states to help deepen the pool of candidates.

“There is a substitute teacher shortage for sure, and, yes, there is a trend of declining enrollment in teacher preparatory programs. We have to imagine what the future is going to look like and be creative. Competency-based learning, innovative design, micro-credentialing, alternative pathways, online learning—we’re going to have to embrace new ways of doing things.”

The one thing he said he knows with certainty is that state education officials and local administrators alike must be adaptable to meet the challenges ahead.

“The world is changing. We can’t use old practices to fix new problems,” Smith said. “We need to change the rules, the expectations, and the opportunities. We have to change the narrative and share the amazing work kids and teachers are doing.

“I try to use the position I’m in to learn about and share out the successes of our districts, to encourage innovation and change. I’m hopeful. Things are moving. If every year we give everything we’ve got, Illinois can become the first state where each and every student in our care consistently reaches their full potential.”

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April 27, 2017
Egyptian Region Elks Lodge
1107 Jordan St.
Mt. Vernon, Illinois 62864
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July 31, 2017
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Green Oaks, Illinois 60048
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Still time to join statewide team for Leadership Summit

There is still time to **register** for the second biennial School Management Alliance Leadership Summit to be held in Springfield February 21–22. The summit will focus on the hottest public education topics, including such things as the budget impasse, school funding reform, the newest versions of pension reform, and the tax freeze, to name a few.

“The summit offers the rare opportunity to come together with school superintendents, school board members, principals, school business officials and other school administrators from all over the state to discuss current issues, strategize and then visit the State Capitol to take our unified message to legislators,” said IASA Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark. “This is a chance not just to learn, but also to offer your input as we present a strong, united front in advocating for public education in our state.”

The summit also will feature speakers such as:



Jim Burgett

A nationally known speaker and author, Burgett will speak about “Leveraging Leadership: Fly the W.” A former teacher, principal and superintendent, he is the author of “Teachers Change Lives 24/7” and eight other books for educators.

State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith

Appointed in 2015, Smith is about to start his third year as the state superintendent. He will speak on the topic of “Educating the Whole Child in Challenging Times.” Prior to becoming the schools chief in Illinois, Smith served as superintendent in



Oakland, Emery (California) and as deputy superintendent for the San Francisco Unified School District, where he led efforts to close the achievement gap. He previously led the Math, Science and Technology Initiative at the Emeryville Citywide Initiative. He oversaw several major programs at the former Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools, now known as the National Equity Project.

Ralph Martire

Martire is executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and is considered one of the state’s leading experts when it comes to fiscal policies, including the pension issue and school funding reform. In February, 2011, he was appointed to serve on the U.S. Department of Education Equity and Excellence Commission. He has received numerous awards for his work on education policy reform, including the 2007 Champion of Freedom Award, presented by the Rainbow PUSH Coalition to individuals whose professional work embodies Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, commitment to equal educational opportunities.



Secretary of Education Dr. Beth Purvis

Purvis serves as Secretary of Education in the administration of Governor Bruce Rauner and also chairs the governor’s Illinois School Funding Reform Commission, which is expected to submit its recommendations in February. Secretary Purvis advises Governor Rauner regarding cradle-to-career policy and oversees 16 Illinois



Leadership Summit ...cont'd.

State agencies responsible for administering programs for children and youth. She brings more than 28 years of education experience to the position, including previously serving as Chief Executive Officer for the Chicago International Charter School, and an assistant professor of special education and associate director of the Child and Family Development Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Other summit highlights include:

- A political analyst panel that will include Bernie Schoenburg, the political columnist for the State Journal-Register in the state capital, Tim Broderick of the Daily Herald and Charlie Wheeler, the former Chicago Sun-Times Statehouse reporter and state budget expert who now is a professor in the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois-Springfield. The panel will discuss the topics of the day from the political perspective, including a look ahead to the 2018 gubernatorial race, and also field questions from the audience.
- A school funding reform panel composed of legislators who have been closely involved with the school funding issue, including Senators Jason Barickman (R-Bloomington) and Andy Manar (D-Bunker Hill), and Representatives Will Davis (D-Hazel Crest) and Bob Pritchard (R-Hinckley).
- A strategy session presented by the Alliance governmental relations staff. The goal of this session will be to discuss strategy and talking points in preparation for legislative visits.

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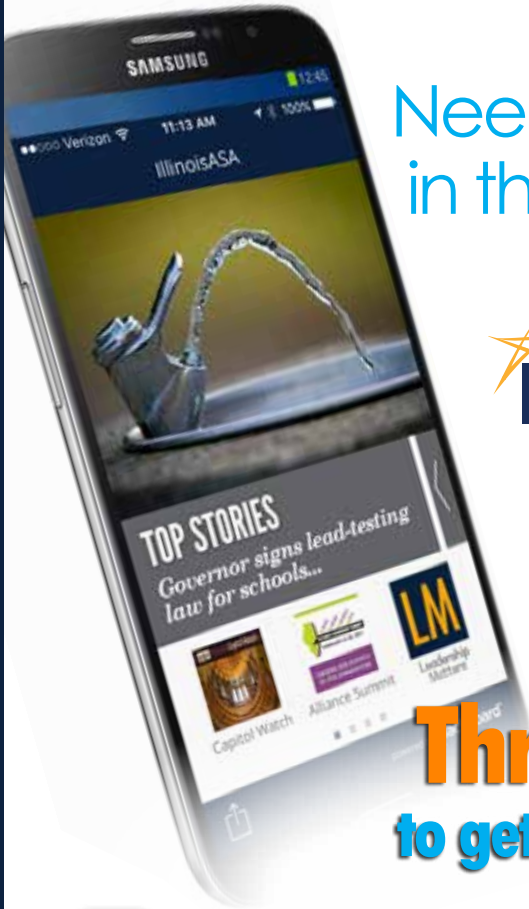
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Presenters Notified: Mid-July 2017

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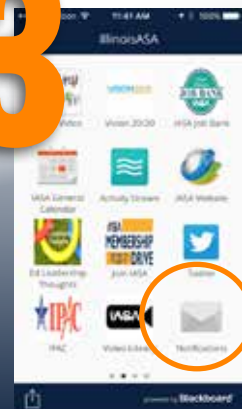
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Avoiding ‘lines in the sand’

**IASA President-elect Dr. Tom Bertrand
Superintendent, Rochester Community Unit District 3A**

As a child did your brother or sister ever step into your sandbox and disturb your latest creation? The incident likely left both of you angry and covered in sand. The sandbox story illustrates the occasional tension between the superintendent and board roles. The board’s strategic role is to define the “sandbox” the superintendent will “play” in. The superintendent’s tactical role is to produce the desired outcomes established by the board. The superintendent must do this while staying within the sandbox. The annual evaluation and reappointment of administrators tests the roles and relationships. It is a test of the boundaries of the sandbox.

The superintendent must bridge this gap between expectations and reality. Board members may have unreasonable expectations for principals. Members may also support an unrealistic timeline for improvement of underperforming principals. The superintendent’s bridge work must begin well before the March board meeting. It starts with the establishment of clear expectations and procedures. It includes a discussion to ensure a clear understanding of the selection, evaluation, and development processes for administrators. It includes a review of the strategic role of the board.

The superintendent and board want the same outcome—effective administrators. That is the destination determined by the board. It is the superintendent’s job to develop the travel plan to reach it. It is the principal’s job to reach the destination. How can the superintendent support the development of a struggling principal? How can the superintendent meet the diverse perspectives of board members about the performance of principals? An effective development plan that includes four important elements can address these issues. It can also keep others out of the superintendent’s sandbox.

Under-performing staff members often need structure and focus. Even high-performing principals are often driven to distraction by the multitude of challenges they face. Effective development plans start with what Cal Newport (“Deep Work”) refers to as “Wildly Important Goals” (WIGs). WIGs are the high-stakes goals that determine success and reappointment.

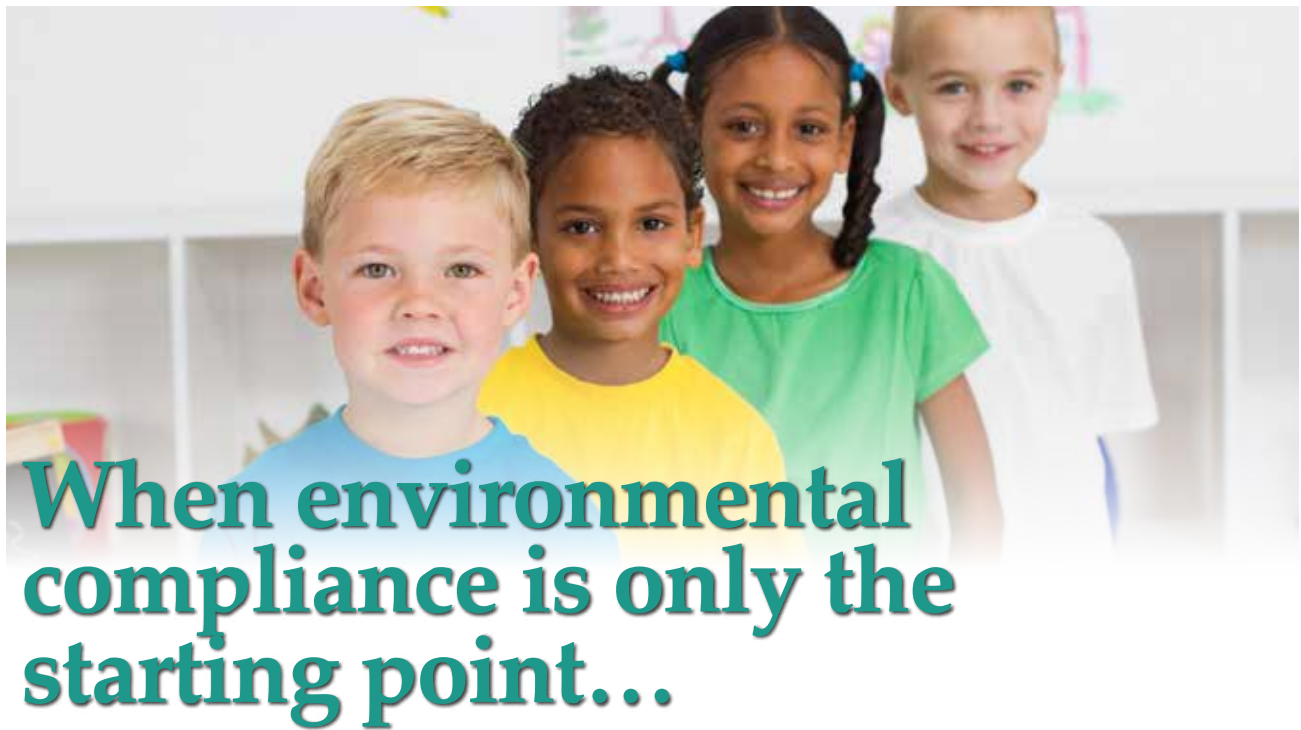
Newport suggests the use of “lag” and “lead” measures of success. Lag measures describe the ultimate goal. Completing evaluations on time is a lag measure. Improving staff morale is another. Lag measures often come too late to change the behavior that is necessary to meet a WIG. Lead measures articulate the desired new behaviors that will drive success on the lag measures. Lead measures guide the conversation about what it takes to meet lag measures.

We all play the game harder when we keep score. Development plans must include a scorecard. A scorecard forces staff to focus on the lead measures necessary to meet the WIGs. How will the principal show progress toward a goal of completing all evaluations on time? The development plan could include a monthly report of completed evaluations. Another lead measure could be a weekly or monthly log of classroom observations. Lead measures are important benchmarks along the path toward the lag measures.

Newport describes the importance of creating a cadence of accountability. The superintendent must develop a rhythm of regular updates and meetings with the principal. The superintendent must expect the principal to own the WIGs. The plan must include a scorecard. The superintendent must press the principal for a commitment to action between meetings.

The superintendent should maintain a similar cadence of accountability with the board of education. Remember, absent information or data, board members rely only on what they hear. It may be appropriate for the superintendent to share key elements of a development plan with the board. Regular updates to the board instill confidence that the superintendent is monitoring the situation.

This process provides a path for improvement for the principal. It creates a cadence of accountability with the principal and between the superintendent and board. It builds trust between the superintendent and board members. Trust and confidence can help keep everyone in their own sandbox.



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While asbestos has been mandated since the 1980s, many school districts still have difficulty maintaining compliance or even understanding what asbestos management entails. Our staff is fully capable of bringing your district “up to speed” on compliance issues and advising districts on how to avoid the traditional pitfalls associated with renovation projects. Since 2003, our firm has managed approximately \$150,000,000 of asbestos abatement projects with an excellent reputation for delivering projects on time and without change orders.

Indoor Air Quality

Although currently not mandated by law, many school districts understand the far reaching benefits of a “healthy” indoor building environment. For school districts interested in a truly proactive leadership role, our customized indoor air quality program helps them reduce and manage risk to an acceptable level. Our programs incorporate the guidance documents and programs already recommended by the USEPA for school districts. This program provides school districts an excellent tool to communicate goodwill with parents, teachers unions and building staff while promoting transparency. It has been our experience that preventative IAQ programs are substantially more cost effective for districts than the traditional “break-fix” approach.

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2016–2017 Senate Bill 7 **Performance Rankings Tool** software available for purchase

All Illinois School Districts are working to comply with the requirements of education reforms. IASA has worked to provide support via the Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File. This program gives districts a method of managing district positions aligned to local qualifications, teacher's credentials, and performance ratings. The program compiles this local data and creates reports needed to comply with Senate Bill 7. The 2016–2017 file has been enhanced with several updates in response to user ideas. The new enhancements include:

- Four new podcasts—[overview](#), transition data, sorting data, and optional merge letter process.
- New method to filter teachers on or off the evaluation cycle.
- Expanded license endorsements and content specific endorsements.
- Ability for users to add license endorsements and content specific endorsements.
- Ability to sort lists of data within the program.
- Ability for districts to add data fields that can be used for inclusion in a merge process and/or for exporting data.
- New report for creating your own merged letters or exporting data for other purposes.
- Only one notification letter per teacher (rather than one for current and more for other eligible positions).

The 2016–2017 IASA Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File is ready for you to purchase and download. The access request form can be completed by visiting <http://www.iasasurveys.org>.

The cost of using this software did not increase. As such, the annual licensing fee will be \$275 for members and \$550 for non-members.

Please note that previous versions of the IASA Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File are no longer supported. Also, the service method for the 2016–2017 software is via email only.



Dr. Patrick Rice
 Director of Field Services
 Illinois Association of School Boards



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 College of Education & Professional Studies
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“ True diversity causes staff to collaborate on problem-solving and create new approaches to enhance student learning. ”

Integrating diversity with effective group processes and mindset for more productive teams, committees, task forces, and PLCs

Abstract

Effective utilization of diversity results in more productive teams, committees, task forces, and PLCs in schools and school districts. Meaningful utilization of diversity builds stakeholder commitment, fosters collaboration, and improves problem-solving and innovation. Integrating diversity with effective group processes and an outward mindset of administrators, teacher leaders, and staff further augments productive teams, committees, task forces, and PLCs.

Keywords: diversity; effective group processes; outward mindset; more productive teams, committees, task forces, and PLCs.

Often when teams, committees, task forces, or PLCs are assembled, membership is primarily based on the knowledge and skill sets of the selected individuals in relationship to the task at hand. Equally important is establishing a diverse group of individuals representative of various viewpoints and perspectives. At first blush, many people view diversity to only include factors such as race, ethnicity, age, and gender—relatively easy to visually identify. While these variables in part represent diversity, there are many more factors such as thinking styles, ideologies, and values which are also indicative of diversity. Sometimes the perspective is that a school or district does not have much diversity if, for example, it is mostly homogeneous regarding race and ethnicity because it is a majority white, black, or brown. When a school or district commits itself to maximizing diversity in decision-making, it will begin to realize that it already has some diversity. It may take awareness training for staff to realize existing diversity, but diversity is there in some form in every school/district. The challenge is to use it!

Diversity's Workforce Context

Effective work teams, committees, task forces, and PLCs generally have at least three major components: (1) purpose, (2) effective use of human capital (people), and (3) operating in a comprehensive manner such that diversity is viewed as being inclusive in the context of assuring participation by a variety of members to maximize the various perspectives brought to the table. As used here, diversity in the workforce is:

- Understanding that there are differences among staff and these differences, if properly managed, are an asset to work being done more efficiently and effectively,
- Understanding that differences among staff create a more diversified workforce, with a broader range of perspectives and attributes,
- Capturing the richness of differences of a staff and harnessing them for the betterment of staff and the school or school district to make better decisions and improve student learning,
- Understanding that people are different and if properly nurtured and cultivated, these differences are a positive force,
- Striving to create a work culture that is heterogeneous and utilizes maximum participation of all individuals to their full potential, and
- Demonstrating mutual respect, acceptance of others, and the desire to work for the common good of the school or school district.

Ultimately, people in the workforce must be able to interact and work effectively with others that they may initially view as “different” for a variety of reasons.

The effective use of diversity helps build stakeholder commitment and identity within the school or school district. Diversity’s goal is *inclusion*. This inclusion of staff from various groups and perspectives must be authentic and meaningfully involve them in the decision-making processes to address the issues at hand. “Tokenism” is not only ineffective, but quite frankly, offensive. Inclusion needs to focus on building collaboration for problem solving and striving to prompt innovative outcomes through maximizing human capital.

Today the media often considers affirmative action in employment, efforts to eliminate bias and prejudice in the workplace, and racial and ethnic issues as the extent of “diversity.” For example, a recent chart, in the *Wall Street Journal*, on changing demographics in the U.S. described the racial and ethnic geographical changes as “diversity.” The aforementioned factors are all important in creating a situation for which diversity can flourish, but in reality are not all that constitute diversity. Certainly many homogeneous, nearly all-white schools/districts need to do more to employ staff of color (only 7 percent of public school teachers are black and just 2 percent of them male (Will, 2016, p. 7). This is the start of diversity, not the ultimate desired end result which is inclusion. Diversity means taking what are actual differences among staff and creating a “oneness” in which contributions from all are encouraged and authentic consideration is given regardless of the person’s uniqueness. In reality, diversity should often be called inclusion. As Derven (2016) states, “Diversity means inviting a mix of people to the party (e.g., committee) while inclusion means everyone dances together (e.g., meaningfully participates) at the party” (p. 56).

A major step in a school or district to effectively utilize existing diversity is to understand specifically what diversity means and embrace creating a work environment that will prompt it to flourish. True diversity causes staff to collaborate on problem-solving and create new approaches to enhance student learning.

Effective Group Processes

To maximize the impact of diversity when working with a team, committee, task force, or PLCs, administrators and teacher leaders need to incorporate effective group practices. Examples include the following:

- Making sure certain members have the opportunity for equal time to express their views and give input,
- Creating an environment that encourages participation and prompts participants to feel free to give differing viewpoints,
- Striving to create a climate of respect,
- Understanding that good ideas can come from anyone, regardless of a participant’s formal position or uniqueness,
- Creating an environment of authenticity and free dialogue,
- “De-individualizing” group members to lose personal identity and merge themselves into a cohesive unit as an effective work group,
- Striving to create “group drive” (energy, enthusiasm, and strong commitment to working collaboratively with others to achieve the group’s goals),
- Clarifying members’ roles, eliminating competition within the group, and facilitating early on the establishment of a plan for how the group will operate on the specific tasks needed to accomplish each goal, including a timeline, and
- Acting as a gatekeeper to make sure the group stays on course, prevent certain members from dominating, block



antagonism and aggression, and seek out input from members apprehensive to contribute. (Bass & Bass, 2008, pp. 756-785)

Lencioni’s *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* also gives guidance for administrators and teacher leaders for maximizing diversity’s effectiveness with teams, committees, task forces,



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Diversity means taking what are actual differences among staff and creating a 'oneness'

and PLCs. Specifically, efforts should focus on the following beliefs:

- Members having enough trust in each other to openly share past experiences and current thoughts,
- Removal of the fear of conflict so members do not “hold back” from participating,
- Gaining commitment so members believe in the purpose and goals to be achieved and fully support them,
- A willingness for members and the group as a whole to be accountable for their actions and findings/ recommendations, and
- An unwavering belief in the group members’ ability to achieve the goals of the group even if it could have a negative impact on how they are personally viewed. (2002, pp. 195-220)

It is important to note there is often a need for group members to have a “social dimension” met in order to enhance identity and a passion to be an ongoing motivated group member. This social dimension is sometimes referred to as the group’s emotional intelligence (Druskat & Wolff, 2013). Therefore, occasional activities that prompt meaningful social interactions among group members to enjoy the company of one another through meals and break times are important to enhancing interpersonal understanding and better appreciation of others’ perspectives. While such activities may seem to counter the need to accomplish tasks, in the long run they will actually benefit task attainment.

Outward Mindset

Administrators or teacher leaders working with groups need to have an “outward mindset.” As used here mindset is the way people see and regard the world—how they see others, circumstances, challenges, opportunities, and obligations (The Arbinger Institute, 2016). This includes those leading a group serving as facilitators to help others “be their best” in making contributions. An outward mindset represents a focus on the impact a person has on being inclusive of others, as opposed to being “self-focused” and promoting oneself at the expense of others. This has some similarity to Dweck’s (2006) growth mindset which advocates change, innovation, and positivity in the context of developing new ideas. A major difference, though, is that the outward mindset’s focus is totally on others, whereas Dweck’s growth mindset focuses more on the individual. With respect to the outward mindset, administrators and teacher leaders act as facilitators prompting participants to not focus on themselves and their vested interests, but rather to work for the common good of the group, be productive, and achieve the group’s goals. Other specific attributes of the outward mindset are:

- Fostering a climate in which others are fully engaged and have a sense of responsibility,
- Working collaboratively with others to solicit their inputs so as to maximize their unique perspectives and then striving to develop the best collective solutions to the group’s goals,
- Creating an environment in which people develop a “committed behavior” collectively with others to solve problems,
- Considering the needs and wants of others to foster satisfaction and motivation in them,
- Bonding with others through establishing positive relationships to foster cooperation, and
- Viewing challenges to the group leader’s perspectives as positive and likely making the leader—and group members—more productive and hence enhance solutions for problem solving.

Summary

So much can be added to the outcomes or work products of teams, committees, task forces, and PLCs by effectively utilizing diversity. And coupling diversity with effective group processes and tenets of an outward mindset in those leading—as well as the group members—will prompt a collaborative environment and a sense of “oneness” among participants that will enhance goal attainment and more effective problem solutions for the group.

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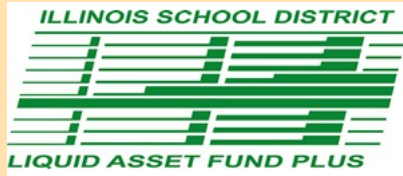
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Completed applications must be submitted [online](#) by *Friday, March 31, 2017.*

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ISDLAF+ February 2017 Monthly Update

Click here to view the February 2017 ISDLAF+ rates, economic indicators and general economic news brief. To obtain additional information regarding this IASA sponsored service, contact Donald E. Weber, Senior Vice President, Corporate Relations/ISDLAF+ at 630.657.6435. To check daily rates, visit the ISDLAF+ website at www.isdlafplus.com.

Illinois reception set for AASA Conference

A reception honoring the 2017 Illinois Superintendent of the Year, Dr. Jason D. Henry of Sesser-Valier Community District 196, is set for 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m. on Friday, March 3 during the AASA National Conference in New Orleans.



The reception for Dr. Henry will be held on the Riverbend Terrace at the Westin New Orleans Canal Place. It is being co-sponsored by Ameresco, Inc., American Fidelity, and ECRA Group, Inc.

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Videos from the Districts

Young Hearts for Life

In 2009, Indian Prairie District 204 partnered with Young Hearts for Life (YH4L) to offer biennial free cardiac screenings for all high school students. The partnership was formed after the district lost several students to sudden cardiac death. Since then, more than 23,000 students have undergone the quick and painless heart screening.

Dr. Karen Sullivan
Superintendent
Indian Prairie District 204



Project Launch!

Queen Bee District 16 is committed to providing students with the highest quality programs and services available. One of the areas the district realized was in need of some updating was the science curriculum and that the Next Generation Science Standards and resources aligned to those standards did not fully provide the students with the STEM exposure that the district was seeking. After investigating options, the district adopted Project Lead the Way at the middle school level three years ago. This program was so successful that the

expansion to the intermediate school was the next logical step. Project Launch was adopted and initiated at the intermediate school for 4th and 5th graders at the start of the 2016–17 school year. All students in grades 4 and 5 receive 45 minutes a week of dedicated STEM instruction through the Project Launch program. In the course of a year all students will receive instruction in the four units at each grade level. The district now is in the process of expanding the program to its primary learning centers.



Victoria Tabbert
Superintendent
Queen Bee District 16



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Calendar of Events

Click [here](#) to view the IASA interactive Calendar of Events online.



- IASA Event
- Professional Development Event
- Legislative Event
- Region Meeting
(Contact your Region President for details)

February 2017

Wed.	Feb. 1	IASA-ASBE Advisory Board
Thurs.	Feb. 2	Cook S., Corn Belt
Fri.	Feb. 3	House Perfunctory
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Mon.	Feb. 6	House Perfunctory, Shawnee
Tues.	Feb. 7	Senate Session
Wed.	Feb. 8	Cook W., Illini
Thurs.	Feb. 9	GA Session Forensic Interviewing, Lie Detection and...
Fri.	Feb. 10	Southwestern, Lake, Kaskaskia
<hr/>		
Wed.	Feb. 15	GA Session Governor's Budget Address No-Cost Technology Strategies to Manage...
Thurs.	Feb. 16	GA Session Membership & Communications Committee, Professional Development Committee CIV
Fri.	Feb. 17	GA Session Western
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Tues.	Feb. 21	2017 Alliance Leadership Summit Budget Committee
Wed.	Feb. 22	2017 Alliance Leadership Summit
		House Session, Egyptian
Thurs.	Feb. 23	House Session IASA Board of Directors
Fri.	Feb. 24	House Session
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Tues.	Feb. 28	Senate Session

March 2017

Wed.	Mar. 1	Senate Session The Board & Its Superintendent... Northwestern
Thurs.	Mar. 2	Senate Session Cornbelt
Fri.	Mar. 3	Cook North, Three Rivers
<hr/>		
Tues.	Mar. 7	GA Session Shawnee, Starved Rock
Wed.	Mar. 8	GA Session DuPage, Illini
Thurs.	Mar. 9	GA Session Moving from Vision to Action... Become an Essentialist
Fri.	Mar. 10	Kaskaskia
<hr/>		
Mon.	Mar. 13	Blackhawk
Tues.	Mar. 14	GA Session Abe Lincoln
Wed.	Mar. 15	GA Session
Thurs.	Mar. 16	GA Session The Board & Its Superintendent... Central II Valley
Fri.	Mar. 17	Senate Session Lake, Western
<hr/>		
Mon.	Mar. 20	The Board & Its Superintendent...
Tues.	Mar. 21	House Session
Wed.	Mar. 22	House Session Egyptian
Thurs.	Mar. 23	House Session
<hr/>		
Mon.	Mar. 27	The Board & Its Superintendent...
Tues.	Mar. 28	GA Session
Wed.	Mar. 29	GA Session
Thurs.	Mar. 30	GA Session
Fri.	Mar. 31	House Session



Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Uses Website to Connect Employers with Job Seekers.

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