

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
President-Elect Candidate, 2025



Heather J. Perry, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Gorham School Department  
Gorham, ME.

**Member:**

- AASA, 2015 - Present
- AASA Executive Board, 2022 - Present
- AASA Governing Board, 2020 - 2022
- Maine School Superintendent's Association 2005 - Present

**Current Position:** Superintendent of Schools  
Gorham School Department  
Gorham, ME.  
2015 - Present

**Previous Position:** Superintendent of Schools  
Regional School Unit #3  
Unity, ME.  
2010 - 2015

**Post-Secondary Education:**

Ph.D. University of Southern Maine, Portland, ME. 2020  
M. Ed. University of Maine, Orono, ME. 2004  
B.A. in History, University of Maine at Machias, Machias, ME. 1995

### **AASA and other Activities:**

- Presenter – Global meeting of UNUM employees. Topic: The Power of Partnerships. 2024.
- Executive Committee Member - Maine School Superintendent's Association, 2015 - Present.
- Executive Director, Greater Sebago Education Alliance Regional Service Center, 2023 - Present
- Mentor - Olympia Snowe's Women In Leadership Program, 2015 - Present
- Funding Committee Member - Maine School Superintendent's Association, 2010 - 2024.
- Panelist - *Teacher Apprenticeship Models* - AESA conference, 2023
- Panelist - *Fixing Student & Child Privacy Laws* - AASA Webinar, 2023
- Reviewer - NCE 2024 Clinic Proposals, 2023
- Search Committee Member - AASA Executive Director Search, 2022
- Legislatively Appointed Member - Maine Bicentennial Commission, 2016 - 2020

### **Why are you seeking election as AASA's president-elect?**

As a 20-year superintendent in Maine, I have learned the power of telling positive stories in support of our public schools and the communities/students we serve. Since *A Nation At Risk*, we have allowed others to build false narratives about our schools. It is time we stop allowing this. It is time we become our own best cheerleaders and storytellers. I want to become AASA's next president in order to lift up the voices of our nation's educators and shout from the mountaintops the incredible work we do each and every day to support all our nation's students!

### **If nominated and elected, what will be your No. 1 priority?**

To help others learn the power of positive story telling in order to lift up all public schools and the great things that occur in them each and every day all across our nation. I would be honored to represent and support superintendents across the country as AASA's president-elect.

### **Sample Article for AASA Magazine:**

#### The Importance of Telling The Positive Stories Of Our Public Schools

Our nation's public schools are filled with incredible teachers and support staff working daily to educate and care for our students. Since the early 1980's, the popularization of *A Nation At Risk*, and the myriad number of "how to fix our broken schools" books, a different story has been told. Many of the stories my generation has grown up on have been predominantly about the challenges and problems facing our public schools. They have been about how our schools "don't measure up" and about how our schools are failing our students.

One can argue about the measurement tools used to make such accusations about our schools. One can argue that the schools across the globe ours are compared to are so much different. One can make many arguments, but I argue something different. **I argue that none of that matters.** What matters is how we as a country FEEL about our public schools! Do we take pride in them, or has it become all too popular to throw our hands up in the air and to point and say they are broken and place blame on this political party or that one for what is happening? Take a quick peek at top news stories about our public schools nationwide; I fear you have the answer!

Somehow, over the years, we have allowed the great stories of our nation's public schools to be hijacked. As a direct result of this, the perceptions of the general public, whom we ask to support our schools financially has been negatively altered. It is time we change this narrative - but how? Public schools are not exactly known for their significant budgets in the marketing department. Actually, I'm pretty sure most public schools, especially our rural ones, do not have marketing departments!

Nonetheless, it is time to create a new narrative. An accurate narrative. A narrative filled with the love and hope for tomorrow that is at the core of what we do as public school educators every day. We each must

take up the proverbial pen and work on building back up the pride we once had in our nation's public schools. We can do this in many ways; there is no cookie-cutter approach. Here are a few examples:

1. Use social media to feature student and teacher success.
2. Make sure every public board meeting starts with students telling their stories with their voices.
3. Encourage staff to share innovative teaching methods and ideas, host conference clinics, write professional articles, and create videos.
4. Get local papers to include "good news" sections in their publications
5. Open up your schools to community members in meaningful ways.

There is no single foolproof method. The key is to simply start talking! Start writing! Start doing!

If told well, these accurate, positive stories have the power to change perceptions, and this is exactly what we need to do.

Collecting and elevating the many positive stories from our public schools requires extra effort. But that effort is worthwhile. I believe that effort is the key. Broadening views beyond scandals and struggles to highlight the compassionate, innovative work occurring daily in our schools has the power to transform individual perceptions to recognize schools for the life-changing institutions most truly are, without which our nation would crumble.

It is time to take fully take back the narrative. It is time to show our communities, our states, and our nation the daily miracles in our schools. It is time to square our shoulders, raise our heads to the horizon, and take back our pride.

