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Cultivating Leadership Autonomy for Complex Times

Ken Mitchell, EdD
Editor
AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice
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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

During a speech in August, President Biden described the world as being at an *inflection point*, defining it as an abrupt turn off an established path without the means to get back on track:

> "The world is changing and not because of leaders, but because of fundamental changes like global warming and artificial intelligence. We're seeing changes … across the world in fundamental ways. And so, we better get going on what we're going to do about it, both in foreign policy and domestic policy."
>
> He asked the audience to name a part of the world that looks like it did 10 years ago or will look the same 10 years into the future. Encouraging his audience to see these changes as "enormous opportunities," he stated, "[W]e stands at an inflection point, an inflection point in history, where the choices we make now are going to shape the direction of our world for decades to come. The world has changed."

Those leading today's schools understand inflection points—their challenges and opportunities. School leaders guided by informed visions understand that their students' futures will be radically different than those of past generations. Graduates will need the skills to adapt and innovate, as will the educators preparing them. Such adaptation and innovation will require leaders to develop cultures of learning and collaboration within and across their schools. It will be imperative to foster educators' initiative and autonomy, as well as their knowledge and skills. This will also require trust.

Fullan has defined educational change as the implementation of intensive multidimensional action sustained over several years that alters the climate and culture of schools while building capacity and ownership among stakeholders. What impedes multidimensional action is a revolving door of leaders. They enter with promises of innovation or transformation often in reaction to external

influencers who have ignored or underestimated the root causes of problems or the complexities within the system and its community. Such transient leaders, impatient for results, compound system failures by piling on more superficial solutions, adding stress to systemic, structural, and cultural fissures.

Yet, patient system leaders understand these impediments. Their work, then, becomes the fortification of the capacity and autonomy of building leaders and educators at the school level.

This is where change is made and sustained. Those who stay in the system and outlast transient leadership while coping with the maelstroms of inevitable inflection points provide the greatest potential to have profound and lasting effects on the school's climate, culture, and success with students. Fullan calls for the implementation of intensive multidimensional action sustained over several years. Equipping those leading the schools and classrooms with both capacity and autonomy is paramount for such sustainability.

Today's school leaders face challenges on many fronts—culture wars, privatization, calls for parental rights, inequities, disruptive technologies, school security, disinformation, funding, and so much more. Alone, superintendents cannot manage these. They need educational leaders at the building level who can make independent decisions in the context of the broader system design that values a culture of continuous organizational learning.

In the fall issue of the *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, educators and researchers provide examples of ways to prepare leaders to do this work.

Steven Baule, a former superintendent, and Paige Peterson, an elementary teacher, both researchers at Winona State University in Minnesota, studied the relationship between teacher burnout and professional development. Providing literature on the emotional demands of teaching and ways in which professional development can provide formal and informal support, the authors emphasize the importance of collaboration, interaction, experimentation, consultation, and reflection to assist when encountering difficulties.

Terry Orr, the director of the doctoral program in educational leadership at Fordham University in New York City, in her study, "The Comparative Benefits and Outcomes of Enriched Internship Experiences," offers evidence for the impact of a multi-cohort state-funded internship initiative: "Changing expectations for leadership interns as administrative support in schools appears to be fostering a more positive climate for districts to create quality internships and for building leaders to be receptive to using interns to complement their own work, enabling more robust experiences."

In her commentary, "Designing Instructional Coaching: Suggestions for Supporting Teachers' Professional Learning for the 21st Century," Sara Woulfin, an associate professor of educational leadership and policy at the University of Texas at Austin, describes a coaching model that includes district leaders designing infrastructure for instructional reform and mediating coaching. Her piece examines the landscape of coaching and summarizes the role of infrastructure and leadership in aiding coaching to function as a lever for systemic change: "We underscore coaches can work in caring, instructionally focused ways to accelerate teacher learning and support tailored instructional change meeting

the needs of teachers, leaders, schools, and communities."

Finally, former superintendent, Art Stellar, reviews David Berliner's & Carl Hermann's, 2022 book, *Public Education: Defending a Cornerstone of American Democracy.* This series of essays from some of education's leading thinkers provides perspectives on fifty years of reform efforts. One writer describes the lack of progress in addressing achievement gaps:

> "What we have to show is the debris field of politicians' magic bombs. None of the initiatives were well thought out or supported in time or money … We might as well have measured the effects with a kaleidoscope … We took a law that was designed to ensure equal opportunities for all, took away their resources, demanded even higher test scores for impoverished schools and punished them for failing. And that's our dirty little secret." (p.13)

Education historian, Diane Ravitch, provides a brief but excellent history of public education, while critiquing the efforts of "fake school reformers," such as Walton, Gates, Koch, etc., wealthy members of the elite. She writes that "… it is time to abandon the status quo of disruption and turmoil. It is time to reimagine our public schools and to bring a fresh vision to planning for them" (p.28).

Part of that reimagining becomes the responsibility of the superintendents and their teams of building-level educators. If schools are, indeed, at multiple inflection points, and it is accepted that transformation in complex contexts requires Fullan's sustained multi-dimensional actions, then a way forward comes through the development and facilitation of a professional learning culture that is designed to outlast transient leaders, survive disruptive and politically misguided reforms, and develop adaptable leaders who can balance their professional autonomy with an appreciation for a systemic strategic alignment.

Evidence Based Practice Article

Designing Instructional Coaching: Suggestions for Supporting Teachers' Professional Learning for the 21st Century

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Abstract

Coaching is a popular and high-leverage instrument for instructional reform. Coaching holds potential to accelerate teacher learning and school improvement. Linking results from current research, we portray how coaching benefits from robust infrastructure. This article offers three design recommendations that leaders can implement to optimize coaching: (1) identify infrastructural resources; (2) align coaching with instructional priorities and standards; and (3) ensure coaches have the knowledge they need, particularly in relation to the local context. We share insights on how educational reformers and leaders can re-set systems and optimize coaching to accelerate learning and change.

Key Words: coaching, district leadership, educational improvement

While instructional coaching is deemed a high-leverage educational reform instrument with a robust research base (e.g., Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018; Russell et al., 2020), the current educational landscape—with all of the attendant challenges of pandemic-related disruptions to student and teacher learning and unsettled state and district policies about 'appropriate' content and pedagogy—requires a revitalized and more comprehensive vision for how coaching might support teachers' professional learning (PL).

From constant demands to adapt instruction and incorporate new learning tools, teachers need PL opportunities that can help them navigate these challenges and provide high quality, tailored instruction that meets students' needs and is aligned to state standards.

Drawing on our extensive research studying different models of and approaches to PL (e.g., Desimone, 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Garet et al., 2002; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010; Woulfin, 2018 & 2020), we argue coaching holds significant potential to rise to this challenge and play a role in accelerating learning (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Kraft et al., 2018; Pak, Desimone & Parsons, 2020).

With current plans by many districts to use Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds for deploying additional coaches to support teachers in improving student outcomes, it is particularly pressing for districts to understand how to move beyond the technical steps of hiring more coaches and toward optimizing coaching (Woulfin, 2020).

This article offers concrete recommendations for educational leaders interested in leveraging coaching to meet the challenging demands of our educational system and offer teachers more targeted opportunities for PL.

Given that district leaders play a critical role in designing key elements of both instructional reform and coaching (Desimone et al., 2001; Hopkins et al., 2013; Woulfin, 2020), we offer three specific design recommendations that leaders can implement to optimize coaching: (1) identify infrastructural resources to improve the coaching model; (2) align coaching with the district strategic plan, school improvement priorities, and instructional standards; and (3) ensure coaches have the knowledge and skills they need, particularly in relation to the local context.

In the remainder of the article, we explore each of these evidence-based conditions and activities holding the potential to assist with scaling up and optimizing coaching.

We draw on insights from several research studies we have conducted in recent years, including those from the IES Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL), a seven-year project investigating the impact of college- and career-ready standards on K-12 instruction in five states (Ohio, California, Massachusetts, Texas, and Pennsylvania).

We also draw on results from Woulfin and colleagues on organizational conditions and leadership enabling instructional coaching. Thus, we link results from our research with ideas for how educational reformers and leaders can re-set systems to accelerate learning and change (Ladson-Billings, 2021), using coaching as a mechanism for supporting educators.

Background on Coaching

Over the past two decades, and across states, instructional coaching has become a popular lever for district reform and instructional improvement (Domina et al., 2015; Woulfin, 2020). Instructional coaches are primarily focused on teacher learning, often working with groups or individual teachers to observe classroom practices, provide supportive feedback, and model instructional strategies, as well as engage in administrative responsibilities, lead professional development workshops, and network with district and state stakeholders.

Coaching mediates the relationship between federal, state, and district policy and classroom practice (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012), since coaches often work directly with teachers to support educator learning and shift classroom practice, advance reform efforts, and improve student outcomes (Kraft et al., 2018; Russell et al., 2020). There exists a constellation of coaches working at the district and school levels, engaging in multiple forms of coaching, and advancing multiple reform efforts (Domina et al., 2015; Galey-Horn & Woulfin, 2021; Hashim, 2020; Woulfin, 2020).

Researchers and practitioners have documented considerable variation in how districts approach coaching. Some districts count on coaches as introducers (or even enforcers) of reform, with coaching functioning as a lever for compliance (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Desimone et al., 2014; Galey & Woulfin, 2021). Other districts lean upon coaches as collaborative thought partners or mentors (Sailors & Price, 2015).

Some offer embedded coaching, with coaches working at one school and in teachers' classrooms, while others have coaches travel across district schools, especially when districts only have one special education or English Language coach who must divide time across schools. In other instances, coaches target certain sets of educators (e.g., first-year teachers), or they may be virtual or use digital technologies in ways that mediate the teaching/coaching relationship (Rock et al., 2011).

Further, coaches vary in their approaches depending upon the nature of the coaching situation, moving from more directive (acting as expert) to more responsive (engaging in joint inquiry and reflection with teachers) depending on a variety of factors (Deussen et al., 2007). This variability in the structures and core practices of coaching raises questions about designing and implementing coaching so that coaches can do their best work to promote educator learning and shifts in classroom practice.

Such variability signals the need for system leaders to optimize coaching rather than just continuing with existing models. Optimizing coaching involves close consideration of the infrastructure for instructional improvement (Hopkins et al., 2013), particularly in developing clear structures, systems, routines, and leadership activities around coaching (Woulfin & Jones, 2017; Woulfin & Rigby, 2017).

The optimization of coaching entails developing stable resources for coaching, transparent guidelines on who coaches whom, aligned professional supports for coaches, and robust, shared understandings of the purpose of coaching. Drawing on our recent work in developing and studying coaching initiatives, we explain how district leaders and policymakers can take concrete actions to design coaching programs that can meet the challenges of our dynamic ever-evolving educational system.

Three Recommendations for Optimizing Coaching

Though there are many types of coaching—ranging from district to school-based and embedded to virtual—we argue that the type or model of coaching matters much less than the design features enabling coaches to carry out their core work. In other words, what matters greatly is how districts design, support, and define coaching as part of a broader professional learning strategy. Drawing on research from the C-SAIL project (e.g., Pak, Desimone, & Parsons, 2020) and coaching across several districts (e.g., Woulfin, 2020), we identified three recommendations for developing and optimizing high quality coaching opportunities that we outline below: establishing district-level infrastructure for coaching, aligning coaching with other instructional improvement pillars, and developing coaches' knowledge and skills.

1. Identify key district infrastructural resources

To optimize coaching, it is vital to strengthen and align the infrastructure for instructional improvement with coaching itself. Researchers and practitioners concur that the nature and quality of the instructional improvement infrastructure can enable adult learning and school reform (Hopkins et al., 2013; Penuel, 2019; Woulfin & Gabriel, 2020). Comprised of curriculum, professional development, and leadership (Woulfin & Gabriel, 2020), this infrastructure guides conceptualizations, regulations, and norms on coaching. Importantly, as illustrated by Woulfin (2020), system leaders can take active steps to create and bolster the infrastructure for coaching, including allocating time and resources to develop coaches' capacity regarding priorities and reforms.

In the C-SAIL project, we found that districts played a critical role in providing infrastructure for instructional improvement, which in turn shaped aspects of coaching. Each of the five districts we studied included some form of coaching, but in some of the districts coaching represented a key part of the professional learning (PL) infrastructure that aligned with the district's curriculum and leadership efforts in an integrated fashion.

In Ohio, California, and Texas districts, coaches were directly involved with teacher professional learning communities (PLCs) and participated (or led) monthly and quarterly district- and school-level professional development sessions. Coaches met regularly with teachers (e.g., weekly, bimonthly) and had clearly defined roles in the district ecosystem. In the suburban district in Ohio, for example, a principal described that coaches were a key part of "the opportunities that infrastructure allows people to have"; in her previous district, "they had coaches but you weren't quite sure of the access - we didn't know where to go for questions necessarily. So the one thing I've been extremely impressed with when I came to [district] is that infrastructure."

Similarly, California provided teachers access to instructional coaches for ELA, math, ELs, and special education, and those coaches not only coordinated with one another but often joined teachers' PLCs and provided leadership at district- and school-based PD sessions. In these districts, coaches mediated teachers' work with curriculum materials, particularly in helping educators understand and implement new curricula and follow the districts' scope and sequence documents, functioning as important liaisons between educators and district leadership. In providing coaches as a key part of district infrastructure for educational improvement, districts can balance flexibility with specific guidance in ways that support educators in implementing state standards and district policies.

In comparison, other districts struggled with how to support and develop their instructional coaches, indicating flaws in infrastructural pillars. The Massachusetts rural district left individual schools to determine what was needed to support coaches, providing little training or opportunity to connect with other coaches or district leadership and constraining their ability to engage in high-leverage coaching activities, such as walkthroughs matching district priorities or PD facilitation on adopted instructional materials.

In Texas, while the coaches' role was well-defined, the infrastructure for training coaches was lacking. These results match earlier qualitative findings from Woulfin (2018) on the format and content of an urban public school district's approach to coach PD. On the one hand, this PD fostered a professional community for the district's school-based coaches. The PD, however, devoted little attention to how coaches should engage in coaching routines.

2. Align coaching with priorities, curriculum, and standards

A second way to optimize coaching is to strengthen the alignment of coaching with system-level instructional priorities, including adopted curricula and standards. There is mounting evidence showing that the connections between coaches' work and adopted curricula matter for the potential of coaching to support changes in classroom practice (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Matsumura et al., 2010). That is, instructional coaches are more likely to contribute to more substantive instructional change when they concentrate on, advance, and reinforce ideas coupled with standard-aligned curricula, rather than offering diffuse or loosely coupled messages.

Here, we point to how districts/district leaders play roles not only in selecting curriculum, but in articulating how coaches can–and should–promote curriculum while engaging with educators (Woulfin, 2020). This reinforces insights from Coburn and Woulfin (2012) and Woulfin (2015) regarding how coaches advanced reform by reinforcing messages on district-adopted reading curricula, playing a role in coupling the curricular messages to teachers' classroom practice. Like Woulfin (2020), we found that district leaders in the five C-SAIL case study districts played a strong role in shaping how coaches could support alignment with district priorities and curricula.

In the C-SAIL project, we found that coaches' alignment with the district curriculum materials and strategic plan, school improvement priorities, and federal, state, and district instructional standards was an important factor shaping teachers' pedagogical practices and standards implementation. In an intervention study that provided virtual coaches to classroom teachers, one of the central goals was to support teachers in aligning their instruction to college and career ready standards.

Survey responses indicated teachers did significantly improve the alignment of their instruction, and the teachers we interviewed reported that the coaching was useful in helping them increase their understanding of state standards, improve their instruction to support students in reaching the state standards, and focus their attention on the alignment of their instruction to state standards.

One teacher identified the individualized nature of the coaching as particularly helpful in accomplishing these goals, in contrast to the typical district PD that was broadly targeted. She noted how the coaching helped her understand that some standards "require a higher level of cognition

than others. And just being mindful that we need to teach all of them." This coaching intervention helped raise teachers' knowledge and skills regarding state standards and the implementation of standards-based instruction.

3. Developing local knowledge and relationships

To maximize the potential of instructional coaching, it is beneficial for district leaders to ensure coaches are well-positioned to gain understandings of their context, which, in turn, permits coaches to tailor messaging and coaching routines to the local needs of schools and educators and develop positive professional relationships with teachers. Thus, leaders should be attuned to the degree to which coaches are familiar with particular school sites and their opportunities for gaining ideas and information about the nature of those spaces.

In the C-SAIL project, teachers and coaches declared the importance of understanding teachers' local contexts, whether at the district, school, or classroom level. Coaches who were embedded in a school had in-depth knowledge not just of teacher needs but of the many variables the teachers navigated on a daily basis. In one Ohio district, for example, the elementary coaches were embedded in the schools, which one elementary literacy coach said was critical because "there's different needs in each of our buildings, and different relationships, and situations." In turn, coaches drew on their knowledge about specific teachers and contexts to tailor their coaching techniques and get to know teachers as individuals.

As one Texas coach asserted, "We have to build our relationship with these people so they trust us, so that we can make them grow;" this sentiment was mirrored by all of the coaches we interviewed, including an Ohio coach who said, "I think the relationship has to come first before anything will be productive." This provides a reminder of coaches' efforts to build relationships as well as how coaches shift directions based on what individuals need.

Other teachers cautioned that coaches that just came into their classroom once or who offered advice without knowing the particular challenges of a class were less effective at knowing what the teachers needed. For example, we found that virtual C-SAIL coaches, who were not embedded within specific school buildings, often held less detailed awareness of contextual factors.

While the online modality was a positive benefit for many of the teachers in the coaching intervention, allowing them the opportunity to reflect together with the coach and notice, as one teacher said, "some of the good things kids were doing, [which] I didn't notice until we watched it," the coaches were limited in the assistance and support they could provide as outsiders unfamiliar with the local context. As one participating teacher commented: "Everything is sort of in a nutshell too because [the coach] is only getting a snapchat of one lesson, six lessons per year. She doesn't always have the context of what went on prior- or post-lesson."

Teachers noticed that coaches' feedback was more robust when coaches held understandings of the school and classroom context, including what transpired before and after the observed lesson. As such, coaches should develop nuanced understandings not only of factors like state and district policy, demographics, and culture but also school and classroom specific factors that shape teaching on a moment-to-moment basis.

As the elementary literacy coach in Ohio sensed, "We've had some instructional coaches that have come from outside the

district, or they haven't been in the classroom for a long time. It just doesn't seem like the trust is there as much … if somebody had experience in the classroom recently in the district, I think it's going to be a better situation just because the buy-in from teachers seems to be better."

Moving Forward with Coaching: Putting the Recommendations into Practice

Refining several facets of coaching could enable coaches to do their most supportive work in the service of addressing pandemic-related challenges across the U.S. education system (Ladson-Billings, 2021). This would entail educational leaders strengthening the infrastructure for coaching as well as considering issues of coherence (Gabriel & Woulfin, 2020; Woulfin, 2020).

As depicted by CSAIL results and other research on coaching, district and school leaders should pay close attention to the nature and strength of the infrastructure for PL, alignment of coaching with instructional priorities, curriculum, and standards and coaches' knowledge of local conditions. The thoughtful consideration of these design features is likely to result in coaching that will better support educator learning and encourage change in classroom practice.

Grounded in research on coaching across states and systems, we remind reformers and educators that leaders play a key role in raising the potential of coaching to drive change. Leaders make a difference through their daily work activities tied to instructional reform, curriculum, professional learning, and coaching. First, district and school leaders are responsible for actively promoting coaching (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Woulfin, 2020).

In particular, district leaders can engage in clear, consistent, and persuasive framing on the rationale for coaching and why coaching is a priority.

Second, inside schools, principals can create positive working conditions for coaches by improving collaboration systems, including improving the schedule for individual and team meetings with teachers. Principals can also collaborate with coaches to ensure shared understandings of the focus and nature of coaching. Principals can also elevate coaches and their coaching; this involves introducing the coach to teachers, explaining their expertise, and making it clear that they value educators' productive engagement with coaches.

Finally, we offer several recommendations for district leaders aiming to institute coaching to accelerate teacher and student learning. Central office leaders should provide funding and other resources to design and continuously improve their coaching model (Yurkofsky et al., 2020). This would entail data collection on processes and outcomes of coaching to precisely understand coaches' use of time, teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of coaching routines, and changes in teachers' classroom practice.

Additionally, leaders would draw on multiple forms of evidence, including this process and outcome data, to design and target coaching so it aligns to strategic plan and school improvement priorities. Another structural step for central office leaders is to refine the hiring and supporting of coaches to ensure they have appropriate knowledge and skills related to leadership, content and curriculum, and data analysis.

Notably, it will be vital to develop coaches' skills on facilitating effective PL to

accelerate adult learning and conducting coaching cycles to encourage the adoption of accelerated/extended learning opportunities across schools and within classrooms.

It will also be vital for district leaders to encourage principals to create school-level conditions for both coaching and collaboration; this may involve creatively adjusting the calendar and schedules or using technology for virtual touchpoints with coaches.

Finally, central office leaders should work collaboratively to draft clear district-level definitions on and guidelines for coaching, setting clear expectations on what coaches focus on and who is coached. This lays the groundwork for strong, positive norms associated with engaging with coaches.

Conclusion

Coaching holds much potential for advancing change as districts and schools re-set from the multiple years of pandemic-related disruptions.

However, for coaching to rise to this challenge, district leaders must attend to system-level conditions and factors enabling coaches to carry out coherent, curriculum-aligned coaching. This includes district leaders designing infrastructure for instructional reform and mediating coaching (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2013; Penuel, 2019).

We portrayed the landscape of coaching and summarized the role of infrastructure and leadership in aiding coaching to function as a lever for systemic change.

We underscore coaches can work in caring, instructionally focused ways to accelerate teacher learning and support tailored instructional change meeting the needs of teachers, leaders, schools, and communities.

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Research Article

Preventing Burnout Among Early Career Teachers

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Abstract

Education jobs can prove to be stressful careers with various aspects being more stressful than others. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the ways that professional development could help reduce burnout in early career teachers. The study used an anonymous online survey to collect data from teachers in the state of Minnesota. Research questions aimed to understand if professional development could help limit burnout. The research study included 289 participants. The study showed that student behavior caused the most stress for early career teachers, but teachers were not hopeful for effective professional development. These findings recognized that professional development to improve student behavior management was the most sought after professional development topic for early career teachers.

Key Words: beginning teachers, educator burnout, mental health, stress, student behavior

As the Great Resignation impacts the American workforce, the need for educational leaders to tend to the effective development of their teaching faculty is essential. Teacher burnout has reached epidemic proportions. In 2014, Gallup reported that 46% of teachers had "high daily stress." That rate was only matched by nurses and physicians according to Gallup (2014).

In January 2022, the National Education Association released the results of a poll showing that 55% of current teachers are considering leaving the profession earlier than planned due in part to the impact of the Pandemic. A full 90% of teachers responded that burnout was a serious problem and 91% felt Pandemic related stress was also a serious concern (Rainey, 2022).

Previous studies had identified that in 2017, between forty and fifty percent of teachers with five or less years of experience left the teaching field due to burnout (Ryan et al., 2017). This is a serious concern as the Center for America Progress reported that enrollment in teacher preparation programs is down more than a third since 2010. They project that is a deficit of more than 340,000 new teachers a year (Partelow, 2019) for the next decade. If that trend continues, there will not be replacements for those new teachers leaving the profession.

Educational professionals deal with an abundance of emotional demands within the workday. Many first-year teachers are not prepared to handle the stress created by the career (McCarthy et al., 2020). Earlier studies showed that many student-teachers start to experience strain and exhaustion as soon as they enter pre-service teacher education (Zimmermann, et al. 2018).

One study of North Carolina rural special education teachers showed that burn out often began to evidence itself in the first year of teaching. (Fimian & Blanton, 1986). The study was done several years ago before many of the current stressors of the new century were added to the educational milieu. Ninety-four percent of teachers in 2021 identified that schools need additional mental health support for their staffs and that nearly the same amount feel schools need to hire additional staff (Rainey, 2022).

Summary of the Literature

Burnout is a psychological response developed from extended exposure to stressors within a career (Salovita & Pakarinene, 2021). It has been identified as being made up of three primary facets, depersonalization, personal inefficiency, and emotional exhaustion (Bottiani, et al, 2019). Teaching is a profession likely to lead to burnout (Taylor et al., 2021), due to the high levels of daily stress and emotional demands (Fiorilli et al., 2017). Only nursing and medicine seem to have similarly high levels of burnout.

One of the key stressors for teachers that leads to burnout has been identified as student behavior issues (Garwood, 2018). Soini, et al, (2019) identified a lack of support and dysfunctional interactions with colleagues and the principal as key stressors for early career special education teachers. Bottiani, et al (2019) identifies burnout and job stress as more prevalent in urban, low-income schools and significantly higher among female educators.

According to Fusco (2017), charter schools are also known for higher-than-average burnout rates and high levels of teacher turnover. Soini, et al (2019) found that teacher's frustration with perceived inadequacy in teacher-student relationships was a factor in

teacher burnout. Ortan, Simut, & Simut (2021) found that teacher stress and burnout have a negative impact on student achievement. This finding along with the difficulty replacing teachers are two key reasons why leaders need to address teacher stress and burnout.

Student behaviors

Hepburn, et al. (2021) identified that most early career teachers are not prepared for the emotional experiences of dealing with student behaviors and relationships.

This unpreparedness can cause concerns that they are not ready to teach and contribute to job stress. Meanwhile, McCullough, et al. (2022) identified that nearly 30% of students enter school with behavioral challenges. Miller & Flint-Stipp (2019) found that preservice teachers are not immune from burnout even before they complete their undergraduate education. Therefore, some of the professional development considerations could reasonably be included in pre-service education as well.

Professional development

Teaching is emotionally taxing work, meaning teachers need care, support, and access to professional learning to feel valued and competent (Coldwell, 2017). Professional learning occurs outside of professional development sessions (Kyndt et al., 2016), and can be both formal and informal (Coldwell, 2017). Teachers learn through collaboration, interaction, sharing ideas, extracurricular activities, experimenting, consulting, information sources, reflection and encountering difficulties (Kyndt et al., 2016).

Professional development focuses on students, with little to no focus on career development and teacher retention (Coldwell, 2017). In Minnesota, teachers who hold a Tier 3 license must complete 75 hours of professional learning hours every three years and Tier 4 license holders must complete 125 hours every five years (PELSB, 2020).

The five sections of professional development required by the state of Minnesota are Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS), reading preparation, key warning signs for early onset mental illness in children and adolescents, English learners, and cultural competency. Districts may add additional requirements (PELSB, 2020).

Professional development can build teacher motivation to help decrease teacher attrition and burnout. New teachers can especially benefit from professional development to help build confidence and decrease stress.

New teachers require more assistance, yet typically have less varied options regarding professional development compared to experienced teachers (Coldwell, 2017). Hepburn, Carroll, and McCuaig-Holcroft (2021) found that yoga classes could decrease stress in early career teachers as well. McCullough (2022) found that a Tier 2 behavior intervention (BEST in CLASS-E) did not significantly reduce teacher stress.

The New Teacher Project studied professional development and found on average teachers had 19 days of professional development but less than 30% of teachers improved their practice (Mader, 2015) making professional development less than effective. Since the pandemic began, nearly a quarter of teachers have felt that have decreased access to professional development since the pandemic began. Less than half of teachers felt the occasional professional development that was the norm in many districts was satisfactory for their professional growth (Kuykendall, 2022).

Methodology

The study intended to answer the research question, "What teacher professional development topics help prevent burnout in teachers who have five or less years of experience?" To understand this question, the study asked three questions in the survey. The first was "How much training have you received during professional development on how to cope with stress or feelings of burnout?" Participants could select one of five answers: None at all, Less than 2 hours, 2-5 hours, 5-8 hours, or More than 8 hours.

The second was "Do you think you would experience less stress if your school district provided more specific training in regard to teacher's mental health, stress, and feelings of burnout during professional development?"

The third asked participants, "Do you think you would experience less stress if your school district provided more specific training in regard to teacher's mental health, stress, and feelings of burnout during professional development?" with answers on a 4-point Likert Scale from Definitely No to Definitely Yes.

The survey results were reviewed using descriptive statistics and an ANOVA and Tukey HSD for the question regarding the potential professional development topics.

Sample

The survey participants responded to an email solicitation from the researcher. The survey was sent to 5000 random Minnesota teacher license holders. Of that sample, 348 responded and 225 early career teachers complete the entire survey. The sample considered of 62 (22%) males, 219 (77%) females, and one (0.35%) non-binary individual.

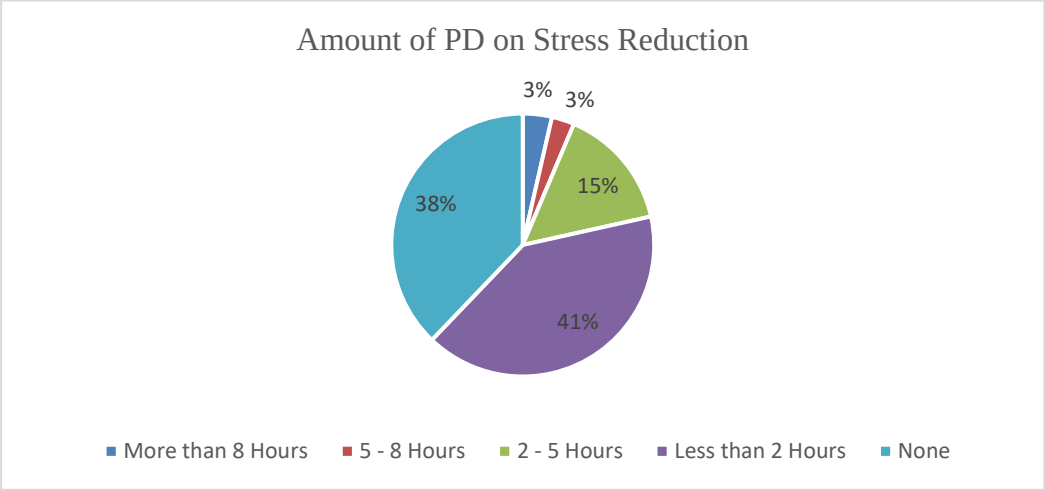
The participants varied in age with 220 individuals between 20-30 years old (76%), 45 individuals between 30-40 years old (16%), 19 individuals between 40-50 years old (7%) and three individuals between 50-60 years old (1%). By level taught, the sample included 105 (42%) elementary teachers, 115 (46%) secondary teachers, 14 (6%) early childhood teachers, and 18 (7%) teaching other assignments including K-12 assignments.

Results

The survey showed the majority of participants (79%) had less than two hours of professional development on how to cope with stress and feelings of burnout. There were 38% of participants who received no professional development training on feelings of stress or burnout. There were 3% of respondents who had received more than eight hours of professional development on the topic of stress and burnout (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Amount of PD on Stress Reduction



Participants answered, "Do you think you would experience less stress if your school district provided more specific training in regard to teacher's mental health, stress, and feelings of burnout during professional development?" Only 40% of early career teachers felt such professional development would be helpful (See Table 1).

Table 1

Would Professional Development Help Burnout?

Responses	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Definitely Yes	21	8%
Probably Yes	81	32%
Probably No	119	47%
Definitely No	30	12%

Over half of the participants (59%) did not think specific professional development regarding mental health, stress and burnout would decrease stress levels. There were 8% of participants who thought it would definitely help. There were 40% of the participants who thought this specific training could be helpful, based on their responses of either Definitely Yes or Probably Yes. There were 12% of participants who strongly disagreed and said specific training would definitely not help.

The last question on the survey asked participants what professional training topics they thought would be most beneficial to help lower feelings of stress or burnout. It asked participants, "How helpful would the following professional development topics be in helping you feel less stressed or burned out?"

Participants were able to respond with; Extremely Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Somewhat Unhelpful, or Not Helpful at All. Table 2 shows how participants ranked the following professional development categories: managing student behaviors, lesson planning tips, time management, mindfulness techniques, and stress management techniques.

Table 2

Professional Development Topics

Professional Development Topics	Number of Participants			
	Extremely Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Somewhat Unhelpful	Not Helpful At All
Managing Student Behaviors	109 (44%)	102 (41%)	20 (8%)	18 (7%)
Lesson Planning Tips	66 (26%)	108 (43%)	44 (18%)	32 (13%)
Time Management	45 (18%)	94 (38%)	60 (24%)	50 (20%)
Mindfulness Techniques	30 (12%)	122 (49%)	53 (21%)	45 (18%)
Stress Management Techniques	22 (9%)	123 (49%)	51 (20%)	55 (22%)

There were 85% of participants who thought professional development regarding managing student behaviors would be helpful. There were also 58% of participants who listed stress management techniques as being helpful. Professional development discussing lesson planning tips was voted as helpful by 69% of the participants who completed the survey.

A one-way between topics ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the following facets of potential professional development, lesson planning tips, managing student behavior, mindfulness techniques, stress management, and time management. There was a significant difference on the perceived effectiveness of the various options. [$F(4, 1230) = 27.489$, $p = .000001$].

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that managing student behaviors was perceived as significantly more likely to be useful ($M = 3.219$, $SD = 0.867$) than any of the other topics. Lesson planning tips ($M = 2.842$, $SD = 0.952$) was perceived as significantly less useful than managing student behavior, but was viewed as more useful than stress management, time management, or mindfulness training.

Discussion

Professional development often focuses on content, yet incorporates little to no focus on career development, teacher retention, or stress management (Coldwell, 2017). The survey question that asked, "How much training have you received during professional development on how to cope with stress or feelings of burnout?"

Of the participants, 79% said they received less than two hours of professional development about how to manage stress. A total of 38% of the participants from the research study reported receiving no professional development at all on how to manage stress or feelings of burnout. Teachers learn how to complete the job most effectively through collaboration, consulting, information sources, reflection and encountering difficulties (Kyndt et al., 2016), something these participants did not experience regarding stress management.

Current professional development efforts are not enough to help prevent burnout for teachers with five or less years of experience. Leaders need to develop strategies to address burnout among their entire teaching staff from first year teachers through their more senior veterans. The potential of burnout to push educators out of the profession must be ameliorated to maintain necessary staffing levels.

Another area of concern is the number of early career teachers who feel that professional development will be helpful. When more than half of those surveyed responded (59%) felt professional development would not be helpful, one must ask why? Do they feel that all of their professional development is ineffective or is it potentially a time issue or are they just not in favor of stress reduction training and would prefer more traditional topics?

Eighty-five percent of the respondents felt that additional professional development on dealing with student behaviors. Lesson planning was a second choice for early career teachers. There is a definite need for improved mental health support for all teachers as evidenced by the recent NEA survey (Rainey, 2022).

Recommendations for Future Study

The first recommendation for future research would be to explore how teachers can be better

prepared for dealing with behavior management in the classroom. Why is behavior management difficult for new teachers, and how can school leaders better equip new teachers to deal with student behavior?

A broader review of how to make professional development effective is another area for study. Are nearly career teachers receiving the necessary support to develop their own professional learning networks is another question that should be addressed?

Conclusions

Professional development is not enough to help prevent burnout for teachers with five or less years of experience. Professional development alone will not help teacher retention or lower the amount of stress teachers experience.

Leaders should not incorporate mandatory professional development about managing stress and assume it will be enough to help reduce burnout in teachers with five or less years of experience.

Leaders should offer optional professional development on stress and burnout for those teachers who wish to attend. This could be in place of another professional development session or be a completely optional session.

Leaders could help teachers create professional or personal learning networks where teachers can share ideas and techniques with one another. Leaders should not use professional development to avoid talking with teachers directly to ensure their individual needs are being met.

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Research Article

The Comparative Benefits and Outcomes of Enriched Internship Experiences

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Abstract

This article presents the leadership development impact of a multi-cohort state-funded initiative to provide enhanced internships for leadership preparation candidates from low- and moderate-resourced suburban districts. It presents the results for 26 grant-funded and 35 non-grant-funded candidates who completed a two-year leadership preparation program leading to licensure. Grant funding enabled the program and districts to create more extensive and authentic leadership opportunities for funded candidates. While all candidates regardless of funding graduated on time, those with grant support were then more likely to advance to initial school leadership positions than their non-funded peers.

Key Words: leadership preparation, internship, school district, career outcomes, evaluation

Introduction

This article presents the leadership development impact of a multi-cohort state-funded initiative to provide enhanced internships for leadership preparation candidates from low- and moderate-resourced suburban districts.

The aim of the state-funded initiative was to create more and better and higher quality internship experiences than were conventionally available while expanding the pool of well-prepared leadership candidates, and learn how these impacted candidates' leadership development and careers. This paper models research on innovative practice (in this case, encouraging new internship designs) for program improvement and yields usable results applicable to other similar programs and partnerships to improve leader preparation.

About the Program and Grant Support

The basis for this research is a university-based leadership preparation program that was sponsored in partnership with an intermediate education unit and 20+ local school districts in the greater New York City metropolitan area. It was a 30-credit, two-year advanced master's program leading to dual (school and district) certification. It enrolled 20-25 candidates in a two-year cohort-based program that required a concurrent 600-hour internship.

Candidates were recruited through district leader nomination for outstanding performance and leadership readiness. Given this requirement, all candidates were highly motivated and well-supported in their leadership preparation and plans to pursue leadership careers. Once they completed their application and group and individual interviews, selected candidates were assigned to advisors and conference groups of 6-8 candidates each for support throughout their internships.

The program coursework and internship experiences were aligned to existing national standards (Educational Leadership Constituent Council, 2011) and incorporated research-based practices for extensive reflection on leadership practice, field-based course-related projects and a year-long action research study. Candidates and their internship supervisors completed internship plans each semester that mapped out responsibilities in alignment with national standards and a developmental leadership proficiency progression (leading to independent work) (Martin et al., 2022).

Local districts historically supported the program as a means of enriching the pool of highly qualified leadership candidates available locally and, until recently, had shared the tuition costs with the university and candidates. State-required caps on school district budget increases squeezed out this type of staff development support in recent years, adding to students' costs. The program was overseen by an advisory committee of university, intermediate unit and local district leaders, who worked to align the program focus and content to changing school needs and priorities.

For six years (2009-2015), the program was funded in part by a state Title II-A grant, Teacher/Leader Quality Program for enhanced leadership preparation and field experience through a multi-district-university partnership. The funds gave priority to districts with a high percentage of low-income students to support their leadership candidates. In this partnership, the districts were suburban and small-city

communities and an intermediate unit that served an increasingly diverse population. They were often at a competitive disadvantage in recruiting school leaders and being able to offer tuition as an employment benefit.

The grant funds provide tuition support ($7000 per candidate per year) to promising candidates and funds to the districts ($12,000 per candidate per year) to enable more full-time, authentic leadership opportunities for candidates through salary replacement or substitute teacher time. The funds supported 7-9 candidates per cohort for three cohorts (the other candidates did not receive grant support).

These candidates were part of the leadership preparation program, sharing the same coursework, advisement and assessment expectations as their non-grant supported cohort members. The primary difference in their preparation experience was that grant-funded candidates were required to complete 400 additional hours of field work (for a total of 1000 hours), the expectations that their districts would arrange partial release time for leadership responsibilities, and received additional advisor support and guidance.

The theory of action undergirding this use of grant funds was that by having high quality, authentic, and more extensive internship experiences, grant-funded candidates would be better prepared to advance into initial leadership positions.

This article examines the internship experiences for three cohorts of grant-funded candidates and the district approaches to using the funds strategically for quality internships. It compares the career advancement of grant-funded and other candidates in their cohorts to determine the benefits of the enhanced internship on career outcomes. This research, therefore, investigates whether grant funding can foster high quality authentic internship experiences and whether grant-funded candidates are more likely to advance to initial leadership positions than non-grant-funded candidates.

Research Background

This article draws on available research on leadership preparation internships. In the last ten years, there has been an increased focus on creating principal pipelines that support the development and advancement of quality school leaders who are effective in improving student learning (Herman et al., 2022). Much of the research and development, however, has been in urban districts, where creating and supporting a principal pipeline is a large-scale endeavor (DeAngelis & O'connor, 2012; Herman et al., 2022; Myung et al., 2011; Turnbull et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, the existing research shows that a combination of high-quality training, strategic selection and hiring, and support are essential to foster a strong principal pipeline. Further, Myung and others (2011) found that principals were capable of effectively identifying and encouraging teachers with strong leadership potential as part of a principal pipeline initiative.

But, as Turnbull and others (2013) found in their study of new district pipelines, there must be a clear relationship between the districts and preparation programs, otherwise the pipeline components exist as independent. DeAngelis and O'Connor (2012) show that many candidates are lost along the way even with concerted district efforts to create a pipeline.

Taken together, such research shows the promising of integrating leadership preparation

and district leadership staffing and support endeavors. Such opportunities and challenges, however, have only been examined in urban districts and not for other smaller districts.

High quality internships were defined (at the time of the study) by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC)—the specialized professional association for leadership preparation for national higher education accreditation-- as including six qualities: offers significant opportunities to apply knowledge and develop leadership skills; is substantial, sustained, standards-based, planned and supervised by the university and school district; and earns credits (www.elcc.org).

Other professional associations underscored the importance of high quality leadership preparation and similarly emphasize a concentrated period of study and experience, master mentors, and a continuum of practice for competency mastery (Orr & Pounder, 2010). Creating internships that have these qualities is enormously challenging, primarily because of the lack of funding to enable candidates to be released from teaching responsibilities or to create initial leadership roles.

Yet, research shows that high quality internships are essential to effective leadership preparation and candidates' career pursuits and effectiveness as school principals. A comparison study of 17 leadership preparation programs showed that candidates from more coherent, field-based programs learned more and had more positive attitudes about the principalship as a career than did others (Orr, 2011).

In one national study, surveyed principals who had high quality internship experiences were more likely than those with conventional internships to practice effective instructional leadership and engage in school improvement practices (Orr & Orphanos, 2011).

Moreover, the teachers of principals with high quality preparation reported greater professional development, collaboration and job satisfaction than those with principals with conventional preparation (Orphanos & Orr, 2014). Using California principal survey and student performance data, Campoli and Darling-Hammond (2022) found that principals who had higher quality internship experiences had significantly higher student ELA achievement gains than did others (Campoli & Darling-Hammond, 2022).

Despite these benefits, less attention has focused on how to develop and support these experiences. In recent years, foundations and the federal government have provided funding for clinically-rich paid internships for leadership preparation that enable paid release time for some or all of the candidates' school year (Herman et al., 2022; U. S. Department of Education, 2011) . Much of this support has targeted urban school districts where partnerships and internship placements are negotiated between one school district and one or more universities (Orr et al., 2010).

Less attention has been given to creating quality internship experiences in small cities and suburban communities. Yet, half or more of US schools are in suburban and rural communities (NCES, 2006).

A smattering of research studies has shown that creating high quality internships—with partial or full-time release from teaching—is logistically difficult for small districts (Frye et al., 2005; McKerrow, 1998;

Southern Regional Education Board; Williamson & Hudson, 2001).

Among the challenges are being able to release the intern for administrative work, provide meaningful learning opportunities and have sufficient high-quality mentors available to guide skill development.

One rural-based leadership preparation program overcame these challenges with federal grant funds for mentor training and a collaboratively shared action research project assignment to facilitated embedded inquiry into practice (Browne-Ferrigno & Maynard, 2005).

While successful, according to mentors and candidates, the program was designed around one district's needs and priorities, and was not sustainable.

Methods

This study uses a multi-cohort preprogram evaluation research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to compare candidate internship and career experiences among three cohorts (2009-2015) and between grant-funded and non-grant funded candidates within these three cohorts.

Sample

The total sample for this analysis is 61 candidates in three cohorts, 26 of whom were grant supported, as shown in Table 1. Seven to 10 candidates were grant funded in each of three cohorts; 10-15 candidates were not.

Four additional candidates started the program but never finished due to family, health and other circumstances and are excluded from this analysis. See Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Candidates by Cohort and Grant Status

Cohort	Grant-funded	Non-grant funded	Total
1—2009-2011			19
2—2011-2013	10*	10	20
3—2013-2015	7**	15**	22
Total	26	35	61

*Two additional candidates never finished; **one additional candidate started and stopped.

Data sources and measures

Data compiled for this study include graduate survey reports on internship attributes and career outcomes, New York state School Building Leader and School District Leader assessment scores (https://www.nystce.nesinc.com/), information compiled by program staff on internship experiences and graduates' career advancement (based on graduate reports and internet searches), district annual reports on the use of grant funds, program director and co-director

notes (over six years), and district reports on funding.

Within six months of graduation, program graduates are asked to complete an on-line survey about their program experiences (including their internship) and their career outcomes.

Annually, grant funded candidates are asked to submit a report on their grant funded internship experiences. During the two-year program, they are required to keep separate internship plans and logs for their grant -funded internship experiences and to submit these annually to the program director.

Candidates complete the state assessments during or just after program completion and their results were compiled from the university's state reports.

Annually, district officials submit a narrative report on how the grant funded internships benefited the districts. These reports have been compiled for the districts of the 26 candidates over the 6-year grant period. This information was compiled for all 26 grant-funded candidates.

Data coding and analysis

Coding. To begin the analysis, candidates were coded based on their type of internship position and their initial school leadership position.

Type of internship: using candidate and district information, candidates' internship experiences were coded as one of three types during the two-year program—part-time release from teaching responsibilities for internship work; full-time release by combining grant funds with other funds; and intermittent release from teaching responsibilities for leadership activities.

Initial school leader position: Candidates' work history following program completion was coded as an initial school leader position if the position required a school or district leader certification. This included assistant principal, principal, special education supervisor, and district-level directors (such as art, programs for English Language learners).

For purposes of analysis and given the small sample size, school and district level positions were combined.

Analysis. The candidates' career outcomes results were compared descriptively by funding status and cohort to determine the experiences and benefits for candidates.

The candidates' internship experiences were analyzed by cohort using qualitative content analysis techniques for types of internship arrangements and responsibilities. The total state assessment scores were compared statistically by cohort, internship status and year.

Findings

The findings below present the results of three cohorts of grant-support candidates' internship and career advancement, with comparison to their non-grant supported cohort members and among the districts across cohort periods.

About the districts

As shown in Table 2, nine districts had grant-funded candidates in one or more of the three cohorts. These are suburban and small city communities that range in size from 2,600 to 8,000 students, in 2015. Two experienced increasing populations and five decreasing, with one remaining stable. They range widely in child poverty, from a low of 15% to a high of 79% of their students identified as economically disadvantaged. Between 3-19%

of their students are English language learners. Taken together—changing student numbers, poverty, and language diversity need—these districts were all experiencing several challenges.

Table 2

Grant Partner Districts by Student Characteristics

District	**Change in student population**	**Number of students**	**% economically disadvantaged**	**% ELLs**
B District	Constant	4354	24%	10
C District	Declining	3060	50	2
H District	Declining	2402	22	2
K District	Increasing	3077	79%	19%
M District	Declining	3014	67%	3
O District	Increasing	4467	52%	10
P District	Na			
V District	Declining	8060	73%	8
Y District	Declining	1777	16	1

Source: NYSED School Report Cards 2015; Note: P district includes a series of special education and vocational programs serving students from other districts.

Most of these districts lacked sufficient numbers of school leaders to address their schools' and students' academic needs. According to district leaders, when preparing the funding application, they were anticipating leadership turnover and needed more, better prepared school leaders. All nine districts were currently experiencing school leader turnover, through retirement or departures. As shown in Table 3, eight of the nine districts had high leader: student ratios that far exceeded NYS averages. Thus, the districts were faced with three challenges—need for more school leaders, need for leaders who are better prepared to support school improvement and serve high needs students, and the need to strengthen the capacity of current leaders,

particularly to address the achievement and opportunity gaps.

Table 3

Number of School Leaders and Ratio by District

District	Number of principals	Number of assistant principals	Number of school leaders per pupil	Ratio to state rate
B District	7	6	1 per 335 students	76%
C district	6	4	1 per 306 students	83
H district*	5	3	1 per 328 students	77
K district	5	4	1 per 342 students	75
M district*	5	6	1 per 360 students	71
O district	6	8	1 per 319 students	77
P District	NA			
V district	16	16	1 per 251 students	100
Y district	3	3	1 per 296 students	86

Based on 2013-14 New York State Report Cards; Note: the statewide average was 1 administrator per 254 students.

The districts varied in the number of grant-supported candidates they had among the three cohorts. In most cases, the districts were offered the opportunity to have two candidates enroll in a given cohort, but were not always able to do so. Two districts had candidates in only one cohort while the rest had candidates in two, as shown in Table 4. Their total number of candidates ranged from 1-4 candidates.

Table 4

Number of Grant-funded Candidates by District and Cohort

Cohort	1--2009	2--2011	3--2013	Total
District B	2	2	--	4
District C	2	--	--	2
District H	2	2	--	4
District K	--	1	1	2
District M	--	1	--	1
District O	--	2	3	5
District P	1	2	--	3
District V	2	--	1	3
District Y	--	--	2	2

The Internship Experience

The grant-proposed enriched, full-time internship was designed to offer several options for using grant funds to create intensive, full-time equivalent internship experiences (in addition to the two-year 600 internship candidates were required to complete). Each district received $12,000 per candidate per year to arrange for internship-related release time, and candidates received $7000 per year for tuition. The program director worked with each district to design internship experiences that best fits its priorities, resources, and contractual commitments, as well as the needs of its students and aspiring leaders, that aligned to their expectations for leader recruitment, preparation and hiring. These enriched internships were expected to expand the leadership resources available to the districts in the short-term, providing critical help in school improvement and student support. The responsibilities were to be developmental, building to performing independent leadership work. Table 5 shows the type of grant-support internship arrangement created by cohort.

Table 5

Number of Candidates by Nature of Grant-supported Internship Experiences and Cohort

Type of internship arrangement	1-2009	2-2011	3-2013	total
Partial release during the school year	3	7	2	12
Combined funding to create a full-time leadership position during the program	2	2	3	7
Intermittent release time during the school year	4	1	2	7

The internship arrangements changed across the three cohorts, based on how the program director and districts learned to use the funds and support quality internship experiences. Initially, three districts were reluctant to arrange for candidates to be released from their teaching or other responsibilities and thus used the release funds intermittently for specific administrative tasks.

Two districts used the funds strategically by combining them with district funds to create a full-time leadership position. The program director encouraged districts to take advantage of a certification option that would enable candidates to work in supervisory roles after they had completed 50% of the program.

By the second and third cohorts, more districts did, enabling candidates to take on full-time leadership positions or have a partial release time position with supervisory responsibilities.

Eventually, most grant-supported candidates had partial or full-time release during the school year for their internship work. Typically, during these internships, they served in assistant principal-like roles, managing all aspects of school operations, sometimes on their own while their principals were away at meetings or out sick.

They also were involved in supervising school aides, interviewing and hiring new teachers, meeting with parents and helping to develop schedules, school budgets, and professional development. They also would handle typical operational issues, such as supervising lunch, handling discipline, conducting assemblies, and serving on various school committees.

Some interns were assigned to supervise a specific grade or content area, working with teachers on implementing new curriculum, developing new units of study, differentiating instruction and facilitating small group instruction. Some served as coordinators for new special education programs, like Response to Intervention (RtI), or new student behavior programs, like Positive Behavior Intervention Services (PBIS) or anti-bullying curriculum. Some also supervised summer school (including all aspects of school operations) or implemented and supervised summer transition programs.

Challenges to Creating High Quality Internships

Working with districts to use the paid release time to create high quality internships even after the first cohort presented several challenges. Each district had complex rules and regulations governing allowable release time and summer work for teachers, board of education contract review, and timing to advertise positions for part-time staff (to replace released staff).

Several of the lower performing districts experienced other challenges, including teacher layoffs, funding shortfalls, building and district leadership turnover, and state reviews of low performing schools. These challenges disrupted internship plans and delayed finding solutions, sometimes for many months.

The value of the paid internship time for districts varied throughout the two years, from its highest value at the beginning and end of the grant periods to its lowest value when district officials faced challenges such as budget votes and personnel change. Thus, it was often challenging to leverage district attention to plan for effective use of the grant resources to arrange for quality internship responsibilities.

Finally, it became clear that multiple actors are involved in accepting the internship resources (typically the superintendent) and in arranging and supporting the interns' work (typically their principals and assistant principals).

Based on this experience, the program director began working with districts as they nominated candidates for participation to consider how they would arrange for internship experiences. Several districts in turn could begin to plan for the release time of candidates as part of their budgeting process and build in the internship release time with their staffing plans. Several districts also began planning for new leadership positions, either anticipating turnover or creating new positions, using the internship resources.

Consequently, by the second cohort, three candidates were in assistant principal-like positions that the districts anticipated would evolve into regular assistant principal positions once the candidates had finished. This arrangement was repeated again for two candidates in the third cohort and three other candidates were identified as likely candidates for anticipated openings in the coming year.

Thus, both the program director and the district leaders began to learn how to plan better for the internships and to follow up with all levels in the internship supervision process: at both the building and district levels. At the same time, the districts began to experience less district leadership turnover creating fewer problems in supporting the internship plans.

Leadership assessment

The grant funding appeared to have had little effect on program completion and state leadership assessment scores, since all candidates did well. Almost all candidates who began the program, finished (regardless of funding). All candidates who completed the program also successfully passed all state assessments (school building and district leader assessments), regardless of grant support.

Career advancement

The grant funding appears to have had a positive effect on graduates' career outcomes. Overall, 73 percent of the grant-supported graduates had ever had a leadership position after graduation, in comparison to 54 percent of the non-grant-supported graduates, as shown in Table 6. For two of the three cohorts, grant-

supported graduates have been far more likely to ever advance to a leadership position than have non-grant supported graduates.

Table 6

Percent of Graduates of Three Program Cohorts Whoever Advanced to Leadership Positions, by Cohort and Grant-funded Status

Cohort	Funded	Unfunded	total
1—2009-2011	55%	80%	68%
2—2011-2013	80	50	65
3—2013-2015	86	40	55
Total	73	54	62

The impact on the participating school districts varied. Most districts had high advancement rate among their grant-supported candidates, while three did not, as shown in Table 7. These three districts were not able to create partial or full-time release for their candidates and instead used the funds for more intermittent release, which may have contributed to the candidates' lack of readiness for advancement. A surprising outcome, however, was that only five of the nine districts had candidates advance to leadership positions in their districts and only two (both of which had the largest number of candidates) had most who did. The two districts with the highest advance rate had created full-time positions while their candidates were in the program, using the release time funds

.

Table 7

Number of Grant-Funded Candidates and Percent Who Advance into Any Leadership Position, by District Partner

District	Total candidates	Percent who advanced to any leadership position	Percent who advanced to a leadership position in the district
District B	4	75%	75%
District C	2	50	50
District H	4	25	0
District K	2	100	0
District M	1	100	0
District O	5	100	100
District P	3	67	33
District V	3	67	33
District Y	2	50	0

Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

The results reveal the benefits of designing and supporting high-quality, experience dense internships for leadership candidates and their small districts. The modest amounts of grant funding used for these internships ($12,000 per candidate per year, plus $7000 per year for tuition) appear to have yielded significant results both during the internships and afterwards as graduates were more likely to advance to initial school and district leadership positions. Creating authentic leadership roles through the internship appears to prepare candidates better and enable them to be readier to advance to an initial school leadership position. Holding all other factors constant—district nomination, program content and internship support—having the paid release time and expectations for full time leadership work seems to make a difference in both the nature of the internship experiences during the program and enabling advancement into leadership positions upon completion.

Changing expectations for leadership interns as administrative support in schools appears to be fostering a more positive climate for districts to create quality internships and for building leaders to be receptive to using interns to complement their own work, enabling more robust experiences.

More important, it appears that when districts view paid internships as part of a leadership progression into a full-time initial school leadership position, they are more likely to identify and support high quality candidates.

For small districts, it takes a more coordinated but feasible effort between the district and leadership preparation program, in concert with other districts, to create quality internship opportunities and candidates who are ready for initial positions. Working collaboratively through the partnership and advisory structure made this feasible.

Author Biography

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Public Education: Defending a Cornerstone of American Democracy

Written by David Berliner and Carl Hermanns, eds.
Reviewed by Art Stellar, PhD

One hundred years ago the Horace Mann League was founded to endorse and promote Horace Mann, the founder of public education in the United States, and his ideas on sound basic educational theory. This book commemorates that development while furthering the visions of Horace Mann, such as universal education being a necessity for democracy. Mann promoted "common schools" (later changed by others to public schools) as a way to ensure a stable workforce, serve as a child-rearing partner, promote wealth, provide moral education, and foster equity.

The list of contributing authors is impressive as they represent significant thought leaders on education covering the last thirty years. Names like Michael Apple, David Berlinger, William Ayers, Edward Fiske, Jack Jennings, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Deborah Myers, Jeannie Oakes, Diane Ravitch, Kevin Welner, etc. are well known to readers of educational literature. Consequently, each chapter is well written as might be expected from such well published liberal leaning collaborators.

As a former president of the Horace Mann League, this reviewer was excited about the publication of this book and most pleased to be asked to review it. My expectations were undoubtedly unrealistic as I found it to be a disappointment in that the offered defense of public education was not robust. Having multiple authors resulted in a somewhat disjointed collection of ideologies, although each writer seems to appreciate public education, especially when compared to charter schools. Nevertheless, *Public Education: Defending a Cornerstone of American Democracy* will emerge as classic educational literature.

The introduction provides a general sense of Horace Mann's opinions about the need for educating everyone and sets the stage for what follows. The rest of the book "…is informed by our authors' multiple perspectives on the history, success, failures, and above all, the aspirational and transformative potential for our public schools." (p.3) Readers should be forewarned there is as much criticism as there is praise for public education.

It has been generally accepted that by the 1950's universal free public education had gained widespread acceptance in this country. By 1965 there was a realization that more needed to be done, and thus, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act became Federal law with reforms following. Some innovations have had short term positive effects, but few realized the desired goals. Testing and

accountability have endured, although heavily criticized. The authors in this volume for the most part look askance at these last two related ideas.

In one recounted conversation at a 2018 conference, one speaker decries the lack of progress towards closing the achievement gaps after fifty years, citing all the time, effort, and money expended.

> "What we have to show is the debris field of politicians' magic bombs. None of the initiatives were well thought out or supported in time or money…We might as well have measured the effects with a kaleidoscope…We took a law that was designed to ensure equal opportunities for all, took away their resources, demanded even higher test scores for impoverished schools and punished them for failing. And that's our dirty little secret." (p.13)

Parts of this kind of condemnation, which in one form or another are continued throughout, are valid, especially the lack of funding. Politicians are always a handy target, although it is fair to say that most of the reform notions were first created by others—university professors, think tank analysts, and consultants. Politicians usually carry someone else's water.

Diane Ravitch provides a brief but excellent history of public education, despite taking a shot at "fake school reformers," such as Walton, Gates, Koch, etc. -wealthy members of the elite (p.29). She goes so far as to write that "… it is time to abandon the status quo of disruption and turmoil. It is time to reimagine our public schools and to bring a fresh vision to planning for them" (p.28).

A short and cogent chapter by Peter Greene entitled, "Our Schools and Our Towns Belong to Each Other," makes the point that each community issues a guarantee or "a promise that every child will have at least twelve years at this facility to learn as much as they can…". He continues after acknowledging that we have not always met that promise. But the promise has been made, and that means we know what we are supposed to live up to" (p.62).

> Horace Mann was an extreme optimist. Kevin Weiner disagrees. According to Weiner, "…Horace Mann was right to argue for the power and potential of schools. But he oversold the product, and children suffer from the Great Equalizer myth. School systems shouldn't be asked to prevent poverty, let alone to equalize students' opportunities in life" (p. 92).

Several authors agree with the sentiment about education being incapable of making our society more equal or that public schools can increase a child's merit without a great influx of money – from parents or society. Other authors apply a similar line of thinking to the issue of race and the achievement gap. Thus, these latter writers would have us redirect our attention from the achievement gap to the opportunity gap.

Essay 20 leads off with the statement "It seems bizarre to argue about whether money matters for schools. How could more money not improve a school? …Certainly, money can be wasted. But it is impossible for schools to spend efficiently if they don't have adequate funds to spend in the first place" (p.204).

James Harvey makes the case that the government has "enormous wealth" that can be tapped if the will is there. He acknowledges that this will not be an easy task as the public has been persuaded that the politicians have limited funds to dispense. He presents a five-part agenda for action:

1. Refuse to Accept the Conventional Wisdom,
2. Make Your Case,
3. Enlist Allies to Deal with Out-of-School Challenges,
4. Note That You Lead a Large and Complex Enterprise, and
5. Preach a Crusade Against Ignorance (pgs.222-224).

An important subtext to *Public Education: Defending a Cornerstone of American Democracy* is that tax dollars should not be spent on charter schools or other nontraditional public schools.

Consequently, David Berliner has written an exceptional piece about the misuse and fraud associated with the expenditure of tax funds by such entities. His research is accurate and compelling. However, individuals familiar with traditional public schools can identify a long list of fraud and misdemeanors involving public funds, even not counting poor judgement calls. If this analysis were done, it would be a draw regarding public financial scandals.

Berlinger paraphrases Steven Stringer in delivering ten reasons for defending America's public schools even with all their flaws:

1. Public Schools Attract Better Qualified Teachers.
2. Public Schools have Greater Community Responsibilities and Community Relations.
3. Public Schools Are Not Strangers to Education Choice.
4. Public Schools Have Greater Diversity.
5. Public Schools Are More Fiscally Responsible.
6. Public Schools Are More Reliable.
7. Public Schools Have Greater Commitment to Students.
8. You Own Your Public Schools.
9. Public Schools Provide More Amenities.
10. Public Schools Match or Outperform Private Schools. (pgs. 281-284)

In his chapter Michael Apple reiterates that "… large numbers of people recognize that there is a crisis in education" (p.308). He further realizes that there is a growing home school movement and credits the "Conservative forces (who) have not rested, which are to be balanced by the ongoing labor of teachers, community members and social movements…we need to celebrate the gains that we make in defending and rebuilding more responsive public institutions" (p. 308).

The last chapter, "A New Deal for Public Schools," takes on both Republicans and Democrats for their policies since President Reagan's term:

> "… each one more backward on educational policy than the last (p.314). Given the harsh and unresolved history of white supremacy in the US and the adaptable and slippery nature of social capitalism, it is no surprise that the descendants of enslaved workers, of African-ancestored youth, the children of indigenous people and immigrants from formerly colonized nations, often experience schooling as oppressive and colonizing rather

> than liberating. This must change. The public schools must become primary sites of resistance, vigorously combatting institutional racism, racial discrimination, segregation, and oppression." (pgs.315-316)

Public Education: Defending a Cornerstone of American Democracy is a powerful tool for advocates of public schools—if they have the traditional liberal viewpoint that public education is the best means of educating children.

Reviewer Biography

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David Berliner & Carl Hermanns, eds., *Public Education: Defending a Cornerstone of American Democracy* (NYC: Teachers College Press, 2022) About Editors & Contributors, Index, 346 pgs., $39.95, softcover

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

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7. Charter Schools and Other Alternatives to Public Schools
8. Turning Around Low-Performing Schools and Districts
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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*.

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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	July1
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

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AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice

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AASA Resources

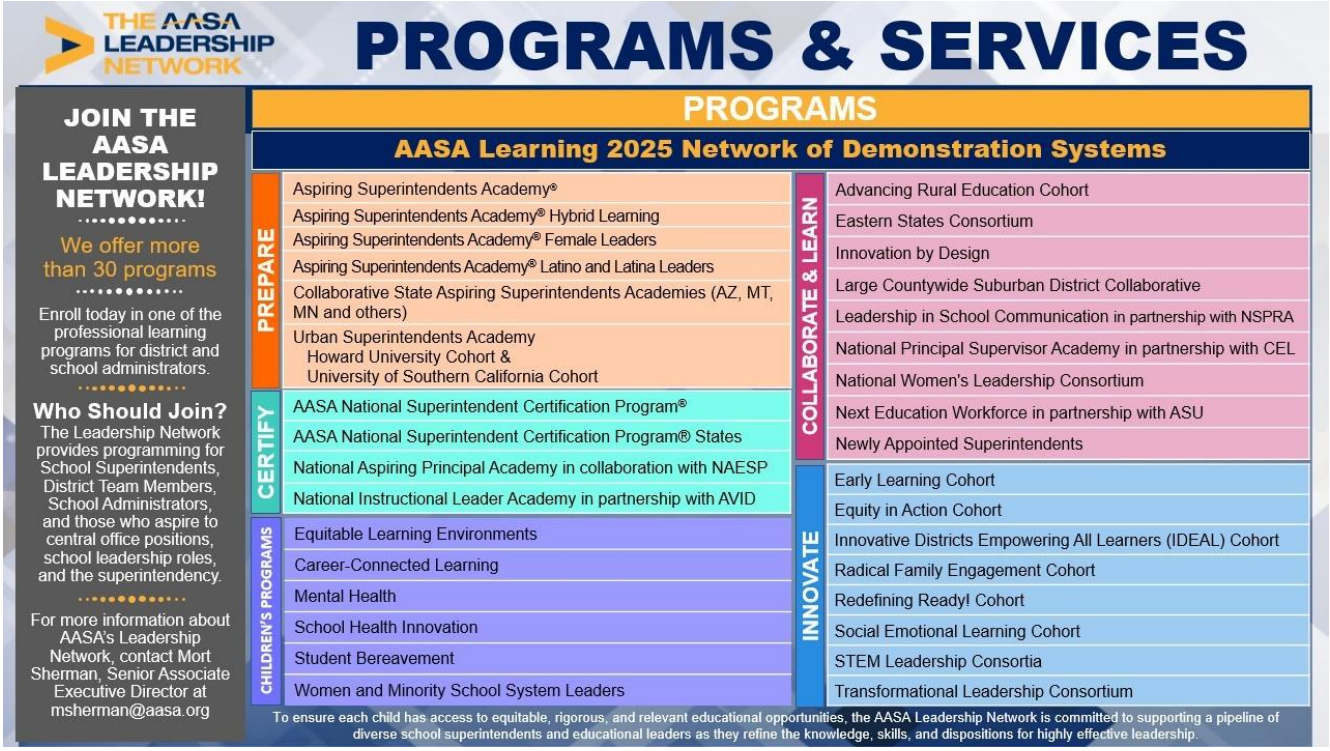
New and Revised Resources and Events

- **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.



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

- **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

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/professionalearning/event/2024/02/14/defaulcalendar/stem-leadership-consortium-meeting-nce24

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