KNOWING AND RESPONDING TO YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH RESONANT LEADERSHIP

Prepared for AASA, The School Superintendents Association

HANOVER RESEARCH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Empathy is often underrecognized as a critical skill for effective leaders and is particularly necessary for leaders in challenging and emotionally-demanding environments, such as education.[1] Educators and educational leaders experience substantial stress and benefit from a leader who can recognize, understand, and tune into their emotions.[2]

To support their mission of developing school leader capacity and building support for mental health, AASA, the School Superintendents Association, has partnered with Hanover Research (Hanover) to prepare a series of reports on resilient, nimble, and resonant leadership for district and school leaders. The first report in this series discussed the role of resilience in leadership and culture, while the second focused on nimble leadership. This report, the third in the series, discusses the key competencies of resonant leadership and the importance of resonant leadership for superintendent wellbeing and school culture. Much of the literature within this report comes from authors, such as Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, who originally developed and popularized the concept of resonant leadership through the books they wrote in the mid-2000s. Synthesizing the empirical literature on resonant leadership, this report includes the following sections:

- **Section I: Understanding Resonant Leadership** defines resonant leadership and reviews the competencies of resonant leadership, including emotional intelligence, renewal and mindfulness, and empathy and compassion.
- **Section II**: **The Impact of Resonant Leadership** examines the importance of resonant leadership for educational leaders as well as the role of resonant leadership qualities in school and district culture.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Based on our findings, Hanover presents the following practical applications of this research.

- Reflect on times in your professional career when you were emotionally attuned with those around you and times when stress made it challenging to empathize with others.

- Reflect on your emotional state and level of stress and how it may impact the emotional environment and productivity of those around you.

- Model resonance when working in teams, developing relationships, and interacting with members of the district community.

- Consider implementing mindfulness practices to facilitate self-management of challenging emotions and stress.

KEY FINDINGS

Resonant leaders attune to the emotions of those they lead, connect emotionally with those in their organization, and manage their own emotions to counteract stress and ensure their negative emotions do not negatively impact the emotional state and productivity of those around them. In contrast, dissonant leaders lack empathy for those within their organization, are out of touch with the emotions of their employees, embody leadership styles that create negative emotions throughout the organization, and spread emotional negativity. The key capacities of resonant leadership include emotional intelligence, renewal and mindfulness, and empathy and compassion.

Emotional intelligence is critical for resonant leadership as it represents the components of resonance that enable leaders to emotionally tune in with others and manage their own emotions. Emotional intelligence facilitates leaders' abilities to lead using an emotional connection, develop strong relationships, and establish energized and optimistic organizational cultures. Emotional intelligence comprises four qualities including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

Resonant leaders recognize the importance of engaging in self-reflection and mindfulness practices that ground them in order to avoid the impact and spread of negative emotions. While chronic stress can lead educational leaders to dissonance, burnout, and defensive routines antithetical to resonance, resonant leaders who engage in renewal through mindfulness, compassion, and hope can manage their emotional state and avoid or reverse the dissonance caused by stress and negative emotions. Mindfulness offers a beneficial and practical tool for educational leaders who face stress to engage in renewal by training them to recognize and manage challenging experiences and emotions.

Empathy and compassion allow for a reduction of stress and renewal, which can lead to and support resonant leaders' emotional intelligence. Research demonstrates that mindfulness is an effective tool for renewal by reducing stress, promoting improvement in emotional regulation and relationships. Increased capacity allows leaders to understand and take an interest in the emotions of others, consider others' emotions when making decisions, and motivate others to commit to a shared vision for success. Leaders with compassion demonstrate care and consideration for others.

Research suggests that the capabilities of resonant leadership contribute to a positive school culture. The dimensions of emotional intelligence impact school culture by facilitating emotional understanding, stronger relationships, and improved communication. Mindfulness contributes to many factors that support positive school cultures such as communication, trust, compassion, self-awareness, and collaboration. Empathy affects school cultures by enabling educational leaders to connect on an emotional level with staff, student, and parents and develop deeper relationships based on compassion and understanding.

SECTION I: UNDERSTANDING RESONANT LEADERSHIP

This section defines resonant leadership and reviews the competencies of respondent leadership, including emotional intelligence, renewal and mindfulness, and empathy and compassion.

DEFINING RESONANT LEADERSHIP

Resonant leadership is a leader's ability to stay in tune with the emotions of others, connect emotionally with those in their organization, and manage their own emotions to counteract stress and prevent their negative emotions from negatively impacting the emotional state and productivity of those around them.[3] Resonant leaders draw on emotional and social intelligence capabilities to be resilient to stressful times and negative emotions, motivate those within their organization to accomplish a shared goal, and develop positive relationships based on an emotional connection.[4] Due to their ability to connect with others through a positive emotional environment, resonant leaders can be charismatic. Indeed, "[l]eaders with resonance are inspiring; demonstrate a positive, emotional tone of hope; are in touch with others; and demonstrate compassionate understanding."[5]

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, who first popularized the term "resonant leadership" in their books *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion* (2005) and *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (2002, updated in 2013), position resonance in opposition with dissonance. [6] Dissonant leaders lack empathy for those within their organization, are out of touch with the emotions of their employees, embody leadership styles that create negative emotions throughout the organization, and spread emotional negativity, thus "undermining the emotional foundations that let people shine."[7] Dissonant environments feature negative emotions such as pessimism, anger, anxiety, and fear.[8] Notably, dissonance in leaders is often not intentional; rather, these leaders lack the emotional intelligence skills to lead with resonance despite experiencing stressful times or negative emotions.[9]

RESONANT LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Resonant leaders embody and deploy social-emotional skills to identify and understand the emotions of those they lead.[10] They "consciously attune to people, focus them on a common cause, build a sense of community, and create a climate that enables people to tap into passion, energy, and a desire to move together in a positive direction."[11] Resonant leaders also recognize the power of their emotions on the emotions, mood, and, accordingly, performance, of those they lead. As Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee emphasize, "emotions are contagious," and resonant leaders manage their emotions to control how their emotions impact their employees' mental state.[12] Explaining the contagious nature of a negative emotional state, McKee and Massimilian highlight, "[a]s we drive ourselves harder and harder, our stress is felt and replicated by the people around us, and not solely those at work."[13] The figure on the following page presents common characteristics of resonant leaders that contribute to their ability to tune in emotionally with themselves and others and use these abilities to create an optimistic work environment.

Figure 1.1: Characteristics of Resonant Leaders

Intuition-driven	Empathetic	Inspirational	Optimistic	Passionate	Reflective
	Purpose-driven	Care deeply for others	Take care of themselves	Collaborative	Relationship-oriented

Source: *Journal of Management Development*[14]

Resonant leaders' emotional skills and intelligence enables them to build strong, energized, and trusting relationships with others throughout their organization. [15] Through these relationships and their emotional attunement, resonant leaders inspire hope and optimism for the future, motivate those around them to achieve their best, and empower others by sharing expertise. [16] Indeed, leaders with resonance make people feel uplifted despite challenging times and provide vision and hope by "create[ing] a climate that enables people to tap into passion, energy, and a desire to move together in a positive direction."[17] To reflect on whether their leadership style reflects resonance, leaders can consider the following self-reflection prompts:[18]

- Do I create an overall positive emotional tone that is characterized by hope? How?

- Am I in touch with others? Do I really know what is in others' hearts and on their minds? How do I show this?

- Am I authentic and in tune with myself, others, and the environment? How can people see this in me?

- Am I inspirational? How do I inspire people to be their best?

Resonant leadership can be demonstrated in different leadership styles that promote positive organizational outcomes based on the needs of their team. Leaders can deploy four leadership styles— visionary, coaching, affiliative, and democratic— to facilitate resonance and improve organizational outcomes, while they should reserve the other two—pacesetting and commanding— for specific situations and use them cautiously.[19] Different leaders can express resonance through different leadership styles and emotional intelligence capabilities, and effective leaders can switch between styles according to the situation.[20] Figure 1.2, below, presents each leadership style along with its relationship to resonance, impact on climate, and when it is appropriate to use.

Figure 1.2: Leadership Styles for Resonance

LEADERSHIP STYLE	RELATIONSHIP TO RESONANCE	IMPACT ON CLIMATE	WHEN APPROPRIATE
Resonant Leadership Styles			
Visionary	Moves people toward shared dreams.	Most strongly positive	When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed.
Coaching	Connects what an employee wants with the organization's goals through care and investment.	Highly positive	To help an employee improve performance by building long-term capabilities.

LEADERSHIP STYLE	RELATIONSHIP TO RESONANCE	IMPACT ON CLIMATE	WHEN APPROPRIATE
Affiliative	Creates harmony by connecting people to each other.	Positive	To heal rifts in a team, motivate during stressful times, or strengthen connections.
Democratic	Values people's inputs and gets commitment through participation.	Positive	To build buy-in or consensus, or to get valuable input from employees.
Dissonant Leadership Styles			
Pacesetting	Meets challenging and exciting goals.	Because too frequently poorly executed, often highly negative.	To get high-quality results from a motivated and competent team.
Commanding	Soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency.	Because so often misused, highly negative.	In a crisis, to kick-start a turnaround, or with problem employees.

Source: *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*[21]

The remainder of this section details the three main competencies of resonant leadership:

Emotional Intelligence	Renewal and Mindfuless	Empathy and Compassion
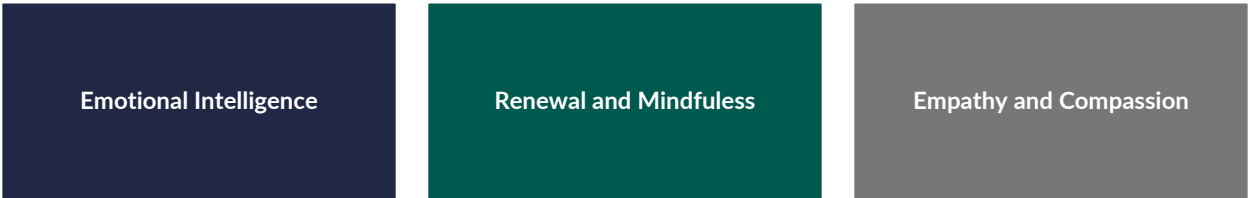
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Resonant leaders have high levels of emotional intelligence, a leader's ability to manage their emotions and relationships. Resonance and emotional intelligence are closely connected, as "emotionally intelligent leaders build resonance by tuning into people's feelings—their own and others'—and guiding them in the right direction."[22] Emotional intelligence enables resonant leaders to facilitate the positive emotions of those they lead. [23] Emotional intelligence represents the method by which resonant leaders can lead using an emotional connection, develop strong relationships, and establish energized and optimistic organizational cultures. [24] Leaders' use of emotional intelligence when working with those they lead also helps establish feelings that the work is meaningful and increases commitment and motivation. "Heart," a leader's emotional connection to the work and those they lead, represents the difference between simply managing and truly leading. [25] Additionally, resonant leaders are also introspective and reflective on their own levels of emotional intelligence, using their emotional intelligence to overcome challenges.[26]

In their book *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (2013), Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee propose a framework for the emotional intelligence of resonant leaders that comprises four key domains: **self-awareness**, **self-management**, **social awareness**, and **relationship management.** These four domains are critical capabilities of resonant leadership. With each domain, leaders gain additional skills, building on the previous. The authors note that self-awareness acts as the foundation for the other three domains and facilitates both self-management and social awareness, which then enable successful relationship management.[27] Figure 1.3 details the competencies associated with each of the four emotional intelligence domains, as well as whether each domain is a personal or social competence. Notably, resonant leaders with strong emotional intelligence do not excel in all emotional intelligence competencies, but rather "typically exhibit a critical mass of strength in a half dozen or so EI competencies" including at least one from

each of the four domains.[28] The combination of these competencies will vary according to the leader's personal style and the content of the organizational environment.[29]

Figure 1.3: Emotional Intelligence Domains and Associated Competencies

TYPE	DOMAIN	ASSOCIATED COMPETENCIES
Personal Competence *These capabilities determine how we manage ourselves.*	**Self-Awareness**	■ Emotional self-awareness: Reading one's own emotions and recognizing their impact; using "gut sense" to guide decisions. ■ Accurate self-assessment: Knowing one's strengths and limits. ■ Self-confidence: A sound sense of one's self-worth and capabilities.
	Self-Management	■ Emotional self-control: Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control. ■ Transparency: Displaying honesty and integrity; trustworthiness. ■ Adaptability: Flexibility in adapting to changing situations or overcoming obstacles. ■ Achievement: The drive to improve performance to meet inner standards of excellence. ■ Initiative: Readiness to act and seize opportunities. ■ Optimism: Seeing the upside in events.
Social Competence *These capabilities determine how we manage relationships.*	**Social Awareness**	■ Empathy: Sensing others' emotions, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns. ■ Organizational awareness: Reading the currents, decision networks, and politics at the organizational level. ■ Service: Recognizing and meeting follower, client, or customer needs.
	Relationship Management	■ Inspirational leadership: Guiding and motivating with a compelling vision. ■ Influence: Wielding a range of tactics for persuasion. ■ Developing others: Bolstering others' abilities through feedback and guidance. ■ Change catalyst: Initiating, managing, and leading in a new direction. ■ Conflict management: Resolving disagreements. ■ Building bonds: Cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships. ■ Teamwork and collaboration: Cooperation and team building.

Source: *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* [30]

RENEWAL AND MINDFULNESS

Stress negatively impacts leadership ability, and educational leaders face an immense amount of stress and pressure from both inside and outside their school communities and due to factors beyond their control.[31] When effective leaders give too much of themselves to their job, the requirements and responsibilities of leading during stressful and challenging times can take physical and mental tolls on leaders, which then diminishes leaders' effectiveness and resonance capabilities.[32] Indeed, for educational leaders, "[t]he emotional turmoil from the stress levels in schools can manifest in physical or medical conditions, including anxiety, low productivity, increased absenteeism, high blood pressure, depression, or other problems."[33] The stress of leadership can cause leaders to fall into what McKee et al. call the "**Sacrifice Syndrome**," "a vicious cycle of stress and sacrifice, resulting in mental and physical distress, burnout, and finishes effectiveness."[34] Leaders experiencing the Sacrifice Syndrome are stuck in a negative emotional state, lose their ability for resonance, and engage in ineffective defensive routines and coping mechanisms (e.g., overreacting or

blaming others) that are uncharacteristic of resonant or emotionally intelligent leadership and cause additional distress.[35] As emotions are contagious, a leader's negative emotions and feelings then drive a negative emotional state throughout the community. [36]

However, resonant leaders have the ability to manage their emotional state and avoid or reverse the dissonance of the Sacrifice Syndrome through a Renewal process comprising mindfulness, compassion, and hope (described in Figure 1.4).[37] In a *NASSP Bulletin* article applying this framework to school principals, Klocko and Wells highlight:[38]

> "Rather than withdrawing from the heat of the problem, entering a cycle of anger or dismissing what is occurring, a productive cycle of renewal helps ground the leader and serve as a form of recovery…[T]hese actions do not remove the stressors; instead they allow for a means of effectively dealing with the stressors that arise."

Figure 1.4: Elements of Renewal

MINDFULNESS	HOPE	COMPASSION
The capacity to live in full awareness of what we ourselves experience, of other people, and of the world in which we live. It means being aware of and attending to ourselves, the people in our lives and our environment.	The belief that a future we desire is attainable.	Being aware of the needs of people around us and responding to those needs authentically.

Source: *Journal of Business Strategy*[39]

McKee et al.'s model for Sacrifice and Renewal Cycles offers a framework for how leaders can deal with and respond to stress, impacting them at both a personal and organizational level.[40] Renewal helps leaders avoid or manage falling into dissonance through the Sacrifice Syndrome by "leaning in to the problems instead of creating distance from them. Through renewal, principals become alert to the issues that are most challenging, and take these issues into sharp focus." [41] Figure 1.5, below, visualizes the interactive relationship between the Renewal Cycle and the Sacrifice Syndrome.

Figure 1.5: The Cycle of Sacrifice and Renewal
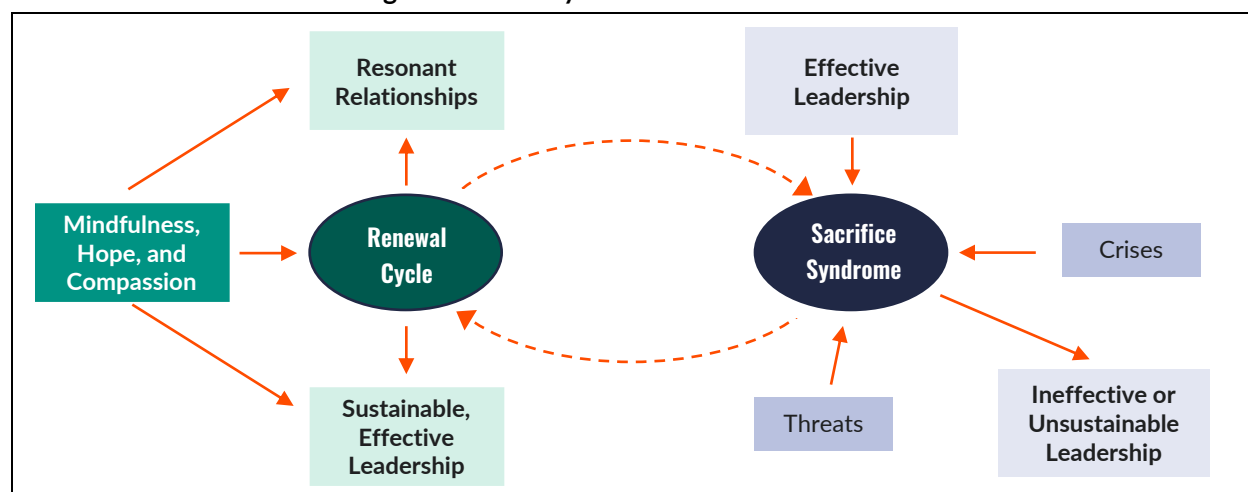
Source: *Becoming a Resonant Leader: Develop Your Emotional Intelligence, Renew Your Relationships, Sustain Your Effectiveness*[42]

Mindfulness represents a key tenet of the Renewal Cycle and a critical capability of resonant leaders by enabling them to recognize and manage challenging experiences and emotions. Educational leaders face

challenges and stressors every day, and mindfulness offers a practical and feasible tool for renewal that allows leaders to focus on the present or detach from the situation. Sample mindfulness practices for educational leaders can include breathing exercises, pausing, taking a walk, or drinking a coffee or tea.[43] Explaining the role of mindfulness in renewal for principals, Klocko and Wells note:[44]

> "The intent with a mindful moment is to slow down the preoccupation and distracted world and allow the present to take center stage of observation. A mindful moment also allows for some distance between the rapid fire of events happening in the school and the time, even if for the briefest of moments, for a pause or chance to respond rather than react to the events at hand. Because of the focus on the present moment, without judgment or criticism, the principals engaged in mindfulness practice learn to create some space or distance between what is happening and the response, learning to develop patience, listening, and compassion—qualities important to principal effectiveness."

Section II discusses the importance of mindfulness for educational leader wellbeing in additional detail.

EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

Empathy and compassion are key capabilities of resonant leaders, contributing to resonance overall and playing critical roles in both emotional intelligence and the renewal process.[45] Empathy is defined as "listening and taking other people's perspectives, [which] allows leaders to tune in to the emotional channels between people that create resonance."[46] Leaders with empathy not only recognize the emotions and feelings of others, but have an interest in the reasoning behind those emotions and consider others' emotions when making consequential decisions.[47] Resonant leaders further use empathy to inspire others to commit to a shared vision and goals and to be the best versions of themselves. Indeed, "[r]esonance flows from a leader who expresses feelings with conviction because those emotions are clearly authentic, rooted in deeply held values."[48] Alternatively, dissonant leaders specifically lack empathy and fail to take into account the emotions of those around them, contributing to negative outcomes in performance and staffing.[49]

Compassion builds from empathy and enables resonant leaders to combat chronic leadership stress and lead with empathy. It includes a desire to learn about others, being attuned to their emotions, and understanding and addressing their needs.[51] McKee et al. argue that "compassion is empathy in action...it sparks positive psychological changes that counter the negative effects of stress."[52] Leaders with compassion demonstrate care and consideration for others. Alternatively, leaders experiencing chronic stress and caught in the Sacrifice Cycle are unable to care for themselves or others, focusing only on themself.[53]

Figure 1.6: The Relationship Between Dissonance and Compassion Among Resonant Leaders
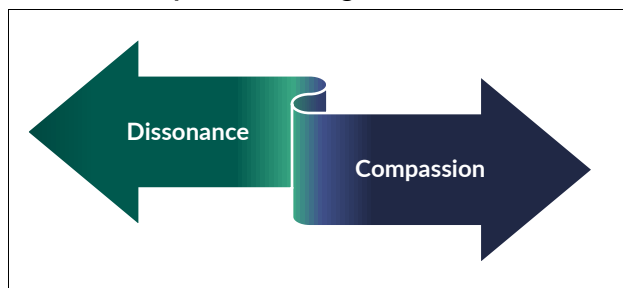
Source: *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* [50]

SECTION II: THE IMPACT OF RESONANT LEADERSHIP

This section examines the importance of resonant leadership for educational leaders as well as the role of resonant leadership qualities in school and district culture. Notably, while there is not yet literature demonstrating the impact of resonant leadership on district culture and performance, established research highlights the positive impact the components of resonant leadership have on educational leaders.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESONANT LEADERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Educational leaders experience intensive job-related stress and cognitive load.[54] Superintendents face increasing demands as their positions evolve and require them to lead through challenging conditions and shifting political, social, economic, and financial environments.[55] The requirements and expectations of the superintendency combined with these challenging conditions can contribute to high levels of job-related stress and cognitive overload. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts on educational leaders' stress, a 2016 *Journal of Education and Human Development* study used a nationally representative, stratified random sample of 6,540 superintendents (28.5 percent response rate) to examine the role of stress in superintendents' lives. Results indicated high levels of stress among superintendents: 98.4 percent of superintendents felt nervous and stressed in the past month with 40.5 percent responding that this was a fairly or very often occurrence, and 97.1 percent of respondents reported feeling upset because of something that had happened unexpectedly during the previous month.[56] Figure 2.1 below presents the top factors the study identified as contributing to superintendents' stress.

Figure 2.1: Main Sources of Superintendents' Stress (2016)

TIME	STATE AND FEDERAL CONSTRAINTS	GROUP DEMANDS
• Time required by the job • Work-Life balance • Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time • Supervising and coordinating multiple tasks	• Inadequate school finance • Race to the Top • Constantly changing state and federal regulations • Student test performance and accountability	• Demands of Special interest groups • Relations with School Board • Relations with Community

Source: *Journal of Education and Human Development*[57]

Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic contributed substantially to additional job-related stress and burnout for educational leaders, as the pandemic forced leaders' roles to expand and adapt to meet increasing challenges and ever-changing pandemic conditions.[58]

Job-related chronic stress can have detrimental effects on educational leaders' physical and mental health. Yale Medicine defines chronic stress as "a consistent sense of feeling pressured and overwhelmed over a long period of time" and emphasizes that it can manifest through cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and physical symptoms.[59] While the most common conditions experienced by those facing chronic stress include hypertension, depression, addiction, and anxiety disorders, individuals with chronic stress can experience changes to their sleep, behavior, energy levels, cognitive abilities, emotional response to others, and emotional withdrawal.[60] The 2016 national study of superintendent stress found a moderately strong association of 0.3 between superintendent professional and personal day-to-day stress and the health conditions respondents reported developing during their superintendency, noting that "the illnesses that were reported by the largest percentages of superintendents -- high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, gastrointestinal problems, insomnia, anxiety, sleep apnea, and chronic headaches -- are attributed

by superintendents to high levels of stress."[61] Indeed, nearly 60 percent of superintendents agreed that stress has negatively affected their physical health, 44.6 percent agreed that stress has negatively affected their mental health, and more than one out of every five superintendent respondents from across the country felt concerned about developing a heart attack, anxiety, or heart disease due to the amount of stress they experience from their role as a superintendent. [62]

In addition to diminished wellbeing, chronic job stress negatively impacts leadership abilities and job performance.[63] Job-related stress represents a significant obstacle for superintendents and a barrier to effective leadership. [64] As described in the previous section, leaders experiencing stress who cannot effectively recognize and manage their emotions fall into dissonance and lose their ability to lead with resonance.[65] Stress also influences burnout and plays a role in superintendents' reasons for leaving their positions, contributing to superintendent turnover rates.[66]

Superintendents need coping mechanisms to deal with the conditions that contribute to chronic job stress. Research shows that stressors have a higher impact on superintendents with lower levels of coping competencies, while superintendents with higher levels of coping competency can use those skills as a buffer against stressful situations causing strain.[67] As the superintendents' role continues to expand and contribute to stress and burnout, superintendents must understand what contributes to their stress, how to alleviate it, and how to reduce the negative physical and mental health and job-related consequences of uninhibited chronic stress.[68] Indeed, educational leaders' "effectiveness can be undermined by the failure of states and districts to recognize the emotional load of the position and develop programs to help leaders."[69]

Mindfulness offers a practical tool that educational leaders can draw on to combat the weight of job-related stress to maintain resonant leadership abilities. Mindfulness represents both a mindset and a practice that promotes awareness of the present moment without judgment.[70] Accordingly, "[m]indfulness meditation includes seeing life and reality exactly as they are, becoming aware of thoughts and feelings and noting them as such… By paying attention to the moment and being aware of reactive patterns, mindfulness also contributes to being less reactive."[71]

Mindfulness is associated with numerous benefits for wellbeing, and practicing mindfulness can support positive psychological, emotional, and physical outcomes, help reduce stress, increase emotional regulation, improve relationships, and support mental flexibility. [72] Mindfulness can also support the development of resilience and empathy, which contribute to effective leadership.[73] Indeed, studies from multiple research methodologies support the benefits of mindfulness:

- A 2022 literature review on the mindfulness of school principals found that, across studies, principals who engaged in mindfulness experienced a reduction in job-related stress.[74]

- A 2014 meta-analysis in *JAMA*, the journal of the American Medical Association, of mindfulness meditation programs found small to moderate evidence that mindfulness meditation programs can reduce psychological stress, and participation for at least eight weeks was moderately associated with improvements in anxiety, depression, and pain.[75]

- A 2018 qualitative research study in the *Journal of Educational Administration* found that rural school principals in Pennsylvania who participated in the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) program, which comprises mindfulness and stress reduction practices (40 percent), emotion skills (40 percent), and caring and compassion skills (20 percent), reported improved leadership skills, self-care, relationships, self-care, self-awareness, self-management, self-compassion, and emotional regulation.[76]

THE ROLE OF RESONANT LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN SCHOOL CULTURE

The capacities of resonance and a leader's abilities to manage their emotional state, tune into the emotions of others, and develop strong, caring relationships contribute to positive school cultures characterized by collaboration and trust.[77] As "resonance is a powerful collective energy that reverberates among people and supports higher productivity, creative, a sense of unity, a sense of purpose, and better results," organizational culture represents a critical step between leadership and improved organizational outcomes.[78] By managing their emotions and attuning to the emotions of others, resonant leaders can understand and influence the emotional environment. Accordingly,[79]

> "Leaders who can stay optimistic and upbeat, even under intense pressure, radiate the positive feelings that create resonance. By staying in control of their feelings and impulses, they craft an environment of trust, comfort, and fairness. And that self-management has a trickle-down effect from the leader."

Outside of education, a 2014 study of leadership in the nursing sector finds that resonant leadership improves employees' overall job satisfaction and sense of empowerment in the workplace while reducing workplace incivility and employee emotional exhaustion.[80]

The capabilities of resonant leadership, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and empathy, also contribute to a positive school culture.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Educational leaders' emotional intelligence impacts school culture through the four dimensions of emotional intelligence, which facilitate emotional understanding, stronger relationships, and improved communication.[81] Much of the research linking educational leaders' emotional intelligence to school culture focuses on school leaders. For example, a 2016 *International Research in Higher Education* study identified a statistically significant positive relationship between principals' emotional intelligence ability to understand emotions and teachers' perceptions of their school's climate, where teachers with principals who could better understand others' emotions had more positive perceptions of their school's climate.[82] Additionally, a 2018 study in the *International Journal of Leadership in Education* of Malaysian principals found a strong correlation between principals' emotional intelligence for change leadership and secondary school teachers' attitudes towards the changes, where the relationship was strongest in higher-performing secondary schools.[83] While conducted internationally, these results have relevance for U.S. leaders and indicate that in addition to positively impacting school culture directly, emotional intelligence is particularly important for resonant leaders leading during times of change, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, changing accountability standards, or when implementing new initiatives.

MINDFULNESS

Research supports a connection between improved leader mindfulness and improved school culture, as mindfulness contributes to many factors that support positive school cultures such as communication, trust, compassion, self-awareness, and collaboration.[84] Alternatively, schools with weak or negative climates often have principals that lack characteristics of mindfulness. [85] The 2022 literature review on mindfulness among educational leaders found that mindfulness supports numerous elements of a positive school culture, as described in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: School Culture Outcomes Associated with Educational Leader Mindfulness

Improved organizational and community trust in the school.	Increased faculty trust in the principal and increased trust among faculty.	Stronger collaboration.	Increased meaningful relationships and a sense of community.
	Increased communication and listening.	Improved leadership skills, including self-awareness and self-reflection.	

Source: *ICPEL Education Leadership Review*[86]

EMPATHY

Empathy contributes to positive school cultures by enabling educational leaders to connect on an emotional level with staff, students, and parents and develop deeper relationships based on compassion and understanding.[87] Additionally, resonant leaders support positive environments and use empathy to increase engagement and move those they lead toward supporting a common goal.[88] As working conditions and requirements become increasingly challenging and emotionally difficult, the necessity for leading with empathy intensifies.

End Notes

[1] Marques, J. "The Changed Leadership Landscape: What Matters Today." *Journal of Management Development*, 34:10, 2015. p. 1316. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joan-Marques-3/publication/283492136_The_changed_leadership_landscape_what_matters_today/links/5fde9d07a6fdccdcb8e5913f/The-changed-leadership-landscape-what-matters-today.pdf [2] Goleman, D., R.E. Boyatzis, and A. McKee. *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Harvard Business Press, 2013. p. 17. http://dspace.vnbrims.org:13000/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/4742/Primal%20Leadership%20-%20Goleman.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[2] [1] Klocko, B.A. and C.M. Wells. "Workload Pressures of Principals: A Focus on Renewal, Support, and Mindfulness." *NASSP Bulletin*, 99:4, 2015. p. 333. https://oakland.edu/Assets/Oakland/galileo/files-and-documents/research-resources/workload%20pressures.pdf [2] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit.

[3] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., pp. 19–20.

[4] Ibid., p. 25.

[5] Klocko and Wells, Op. cit., p. 334.

[6] [1] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit. [2] Boyatzis, R. and A. McKee. *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion*. Harvard Business Press, 2005. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Resonant_Leadership/QWRaHu6ovv8C?hl=en&gbpv=1&kptab=getbook

[7] Quote from: [1] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 6. [2] McKee, A. and D. Massimilian. "Resonant Leadership: A New Kind of Leadership for the Digital Age." *Journal of Business Strategy*, 27:5, January 1, 2006. pp. 23, 46. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/02756660610692707/full/pdf?title=resonant-leadership-a-new-kind-of-leadership-for-the-digital-age

[8] McKee, A. et al. *Becoming a Resonant Leader: Develop Your Emotional Intelligence, Renew Your Relationships, Sustain Your Effectiveness*. Harvard Business Press, 2008. pp. 39–40. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Becoming_a_Resonant_Leader/7KWnc1IECeYC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=resonant+leadership&pg=PR9&printsec=frontcover

[9] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 23.

[10] Boyatzis, R. and A. McKee. "Inspiring Others through Resonant Leadership." *Business Strategy Review*, 17, January 1, 2006. p. 16. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228136383_Inspiring_others_through_resonant_leadership

[11] Boyatzis and McKee, *Resonant Leadership*, Op. cit., p. 22.

[12] Boyatzis and McKee, "Inspiring Others through Resonant Leadership," Op. cit., p. 17.

[13] McKee and Massimilian, Op. cit., p. 46.

[14] Marques, Op. cit., pp. 1317–1318.

[15] Boyatzis and McKee, "Inspiring Others through Resonant Leadership," Op. cit., p. 17.

[16] Cummings, G.G., A.L. Grau, and C.A. Wong. "Resonant Leadership and Workplace Empowerment: The Value of Positive Organizational Cultures in Reducing Workplace Incivility." *Nursing*, 32:1, 2014. p. 7. https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/individuals/pdf/LeadershipandWorkplaceempowerment.pdf [2] McKee et al., Op. cit., pp. 40–41.

[17] [1] Boyatzis and McKee, *Resonant Leadership*, Op. cit., p. 22. [2] McKee et al., Op. cit., pp. 40–41.

[18] Bullet points quoted verbatim with modification from: McKee et al., Op. cit., p. 42.

[19] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 53.

[20] Ibid., p. 84.

[21] Chart contents quoted verbatim with slight modification from: Ibid., p. 55.

[22] Ibid., p. 26.

[23] Ibid., p. 6.

[24] Turk, E.W. and Z.M. Wolfe. "Principals' Perceived Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Resonant Leadership throughout Their Career." *International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership*, 2018. p. 150. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1218931.pdf

[25] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 21.

[26] Turk and Wolfe, Op. cit., p. 150.

[27] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 30.

[28] Ibid., pp. 38–40.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Figure contents quoted verbatim from: Ibid., p. 39.

[31] Klocko and Wells, Op. cit., p. 333.

[32] Boyatzis and McKee, *Resonant Leadership*, Op. cit., pp. 40–41.

[33] Klocko and Wells, Op. cit., p. 333.

[34] McKee et al., Op. cit., p. 37.

[35] Boyatzis and McKee, *Resonant Leadership*, Op. cit., pp. 44–45.

[36] McKee et al., Op. cit., p. 37.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Klocko and Wells, Op. cit., p. 345.

39 Figure contents quoted verbatim with slight modification from: McKee and Massimilian, Op. cit., p. 47.

40 Klocko and Wells, Op. cit., p. 334.

41 Ibid., p. 335.

42 Figure reproduced verbatim from: McKee et al., Op. cit., p. 38.

43 Klocko and Wells, Op. cit.

44 Ibid., p. 346.

45 [1] Boyatzis and McKee, *Resonant Leadership*, Op. cit. [2] McKee et al., Op. cit. [3] McKee and Massimilian, Op. cit.

46 Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 31.

47 [1] Ibid., p. 50. [2] Turk and Wolfe, Op. cit., p. 159.

48 Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., pp. 48–49.

49 Ibid., pp. 23, 30, 31.

50 McKee and Massimilian, Op. cit., p. 48.

51 McKee and Massimilian, Op. cit., p. 48.

52 McKee et al., Op. cit., p. 39.

53 McKee and Massimilian, Op. cit., p. 48.

54 [1] Lefdal, J. et al. "Superintendent Stress: Identifying the Causes and Learning to Cope." *Editorial Review Board*, 55, 2019. p. 56. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-De-Jong-5/publication/336369004_Superintendent_Stress_Identifying_the_Causes_and_Learning_to_Cope/links/5d9dff59299bf13f40d0c9b2/Superintendent-Stress-Identifying-the-Causes-and-Learning-to-Cope.pdf#page=55 [2] Robinson, K. and C. Shakeshaft. "Superintendent Stress and Superintendent Health: A National Study." *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 5, January 1, 2016. http://jehdnet.com/journals/jehd/Vol_5_No_1_March_2016/13.pdf [3] Mahfouz, J., M.T. Greenberg, and A. Rodriguez. "Principals' Social and Emotional Competence." Pennsylvania State University, 2019. p. 6. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Julia_Mahfouz/publication/337001604_Principals'_Social_and_Emotional_Competence_A_Key_Factor_for_Creating_Caring_Schools/links/5dbf36d6299bf1a47b11c562/Principals-Social-and-Emotional-Competence-A-Key-Factor-for-Creating-Caring-Schools.pdf

55 Lefdal et al., Op. cit., p. 56.

56 Robinson and Shakeshaft, Op. cit.

57 Figure reproduced verbatim from: Ibid., p. 125.

58 Woo, A. and E.D. Steiner. "The Well-Being of Secondary School Principals One Year into the COVID-19 Pandemic." RAND Corporation, January 26, 2022. pp. 1–2. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA827-6.html

59 "Chronic Stress." Yale Medicine. https://www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/stress-disorder

60 Ibid.

61 Robinson and Shakeshaft, Op. cit.

62 Ibid.

63 Mahfouz, Greenberg, and Rodriguez, Op. cit., p. 6.

64 Lefdal et al., Op. cit., p. 56.

65 [1] Boyatzis and McKee, *Resonant Leadership*, Op. cit., pp. 40–45. [2] McKee et al., Op. cit., p. 37.

66 Robinson and Shakeshaft, Op. cit., p. 122.

67 Litchka, P., M. Fenzel, and W.S. Polka. "The Stress Process Among School Superintendents." National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Connexions Content Commons, 2009. p. 5. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1071433.pdf

68 Lefdal et al., Op. cit., p. 56.

69 Mahfouz, Greenberg, and Rodriguez, Op. cit., p. 6.

70 [1] Mahfouz, J. "Mindfulness Training for School Administrators: Effects on Well-Being and Leadership." *Journal of Educational Administration*, 56:6, November 2018. p. 2. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Julia-Mahfouz/publication/326163755_Mindfulness_training_for_school_administrators_effects_on_well-being_and_leadership/links/5c13fe324585157ac1c2e800/Mindfulness-training-for-school-administrators-effects-on-well-being-and-leadership.pdf [2] Wells, C. "Principals Responding to Constant Pressure: Finding a Source of Stress Management." *NASSP Bulletin*, 97, December 11, 2013. p. 341. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Caryn-Wells/publication/270725976_Principals_Responding_to_Constant_Pressure_Finding_a_Source_of_Stress_Management/links/5a7bafb6a6fdcce697d754c5/Principals-Responding-to-Constant-Pressure-Finding-a-Source-of-Stress-Management.pdf [3] Wells, C.M. "Educational Leaders Describe a Job Too Big for One: Stress Reduction In the Midst of Leading." *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 10:3, Fall 2013. Accessed via EbscoHost.

71 Wells, "Principals Responding to Constant Pressure," Op. cit., p. 341.

72 [1] Mahfouz, Greenberg, and Rodriguez, Op. cit., p. 8. [2] Mahfouz, Op. cit., p. 2. [3] Wells, "Principals Responding to Constant Pressure," Op. cit., p. 342.

73 Wells, C.M. and B.A. Klocko. "Principal Well-Being and Resilience: Mindfulness as a Means to That End." *NASSP Bulletin*, 102:2, June 1, 2018. p. 167. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0192636518777813

74 Partin, J.M. "A Systematic Review of Mindfulness in School Principals." *ICPEL Education Leadership Review*, 22:1, 2022. p. 8. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-Coker-9/publication/366712901_Playing_Charades_Failures_Fads_and_Follies_of_School_Improvement_Plans/links/63afafdea03100368a3f5637/Playing-Charades-Failures-Fads-and-Follies-of-School-Improvement-Plans.pdf#page=5

75 Goyal, M. et al. "Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-Being: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 174:3, March 1, 2014. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/1809754

76 Mahfouz, Op. cit.

[77] [1] White, B.A.A. et al. "A Leadership Education Framework Addressing Relationship Management, Burnout, and Team Trust." *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings*, 32:2, February 1, 2019. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6541093/ [2] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 47.

[78] McKee et al., Op. cit., pp. 39–40.

[79] Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, Op. cit., p. 47.

[80] Spence Laschinger, H.K. et al. "Resonant Leadership and Workplace Empowerment: The Value of Positive Organizational Cultures in Reducing Workplace Incivility." *Nursing Economics*, 32:1, January 2014. pp. 9–10. https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/individuals/pdf/LeadershipandWorkplaceempowerment.pdf

[81] Mahfouz, Greenberg, and Rodriguez, Op. cit., p. 6.

[82] Alred, A. et al. "The Impact of Principal Emotional Intelligence on Teacher Perceptions of School Climate." *International Research in Higher Education*, 1:2, 2016. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/71606567/6048-libre.pdf?1635229455=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_Impact_of_Principal_Emotional_Intell.pdf&Expires=1676411676&Signature=SOMHu2PXqI8w36HFZrXmO~I1eLUaDLYEH1kxNrq~ZOl-rPg6FC0CRolkjjZu2UWxqBMwCiE7iBWOrF4Qrmw9mje9M5JafNi3eCmBicPhVtRmH8K0gfKunHiYBdBdv0KIo4JsXkJ66lSGU5LoYG5pVrQEvEmRTeLrYnx-8ssvMBsFHHeroBBXs6jyjPM9NOOuP-01n9AFFFdLS373WoILnqUcnyu-eCDjBfUMvPk6OUfohvCTQO5pvU4lsYQl9PVtrHRBhHe6zFne1tfCrHnd2GUvMqyCMDFzLblnyGyff8APK1xuiomhz5kCbbInf6LLqif6kY9qXXWCezRJcimXLA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

[83] Mei Kin, T. and O. Abdull Kareem. "The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence of School Principals in Managing Change and Teacher Attitudes towards Change." *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 22, June 11, 2018. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tai-Mei-Kin/publication/325703092_The_relationship_between_emotional_intelligence_of_school_principals_in_managing_change_and_teacher_attitudes_towards_change/links/5d26ba9a299bf1547cab6234/The-relationship-between-emotional-intelligence-of-school-principals-in-managing-change-and-teacher-attitudes-towards-change.pdf

[84] [1] Partin, Op. cit., p. 6. [2] Wells and Klocko, Op. cit., p. 168.

[85] Partin, Op. cit., p. 6.

[86] Figure content adapted from: Ibid., p. 9.

[87] Turk and Wolfe, Op. cit., p. 159.

[88] White et al., Op. cit.

ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH

Hanover Research provides high-quality, custom research and analytics through a cost-effective model that helps clients make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

OUR SOLUTIONS

ACADEMIC SOLUTIONS

- **College & Career Readiness:** Support on-time student graduation and prepare all students for post-secondary education and careers.

- **Program Evaluation:** Measure program impact to support informed, evidence-based investments in resources that maximize student outcomes and manage costs.

- **Safe & Supportive Environments:** Create an environment that supports the academic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of students, parents, and staff through a comprehensive annual assessment of climate and culture.

ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

- **Family and Community Engagement:** Expand and strengthen family and community relationships and identify community partnerships that support student success.

- **Talent Recruitment, Retention & Development:** Attract and retain the best staff through an enhanced understanding of the teacher experience and staff professional development needs.

- **Operations Improvement:** Proactively address changes in demographics, enrollment levels, and community expectations in your budgeting decisions.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION

Build a high-performing administration that is the first choice for students, parents, and staff.

OUR BENEFITS

EXPERT
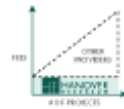200+ analysts with multiple methodology research expertise

FLEXIBLE
Ongoing custom research agenda adapts with organizations' needs

DEDICATED
Exclusive account and research teams ensure strategic partnership

EFFICIENT
Annual, fixed-fee model shares costs and benefits