

# DA

District Administration®

March 2022

FETC Wrap up ISSUE! See highlights on page 18

## The Battle for Better Behavior

As more students act out in school, here are ideas for alleviating the problem 10

### Lessons Learned from a Tough Year

Superintendents share the ones they value most 14

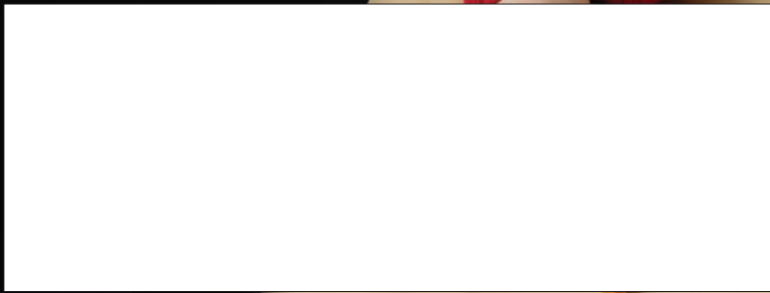
### Making Testing More Valuable

Shifting the focus from assessments to what students need post-COVID 22

### Creating Comfort for Students through Safety

An expert offers 5 tips for optimizing campus security 28

DistrictAdministration.com



# TEACH MATH the Way the BRAIN Learns



# ST Math<sup>®</sup>

## CAN A GAME CHANGE HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT MATH?

With ST Math, the answer is **YES** for nearly 1.8 million students across all 50 states.

ST Math is a PreK-8 visual instructional program that teaches math the way the brain learns.

Our patented, neuroscience-based approach is designed to drive deep conceptual understanding, and is proven over hundreds of studies to deliver repeatable results.

ST Math can make a positive impact for students as we work toward **learning recovery**.

ST Math is not just another math game. Try it today at [stmath.com/da](https://stmath.com/da).



Higher Math Self Beliefs



Equitable Access  
for Students



Increased Proficiency  
on Grade Level



BEST FOUNDATIONAL MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTIONAL SOLUTION

//CODiE//  
2021 SIIA CODiE WINNER



ST Math is created by  
**MIND Research Institute**

[mindresearch.org](https://mindresearch.org)

## Recommended Reading in This Issue

This month marks two years since COVID-19 upended education (and most other aspects of life). As we move forward, and hopefully past the pandemic, educators are facing new challenges. Among them is the rise in students' bad behavior, an epidemic in its own right. We spoke to counselors, who shared ideas for easing trauma and boosting engagement. Find this on page 10.

Superintendents, too, have learned much over the past two years. District leaders share the lessons they have learned, including the value of strong leadership and communication. Turn to page 14 for this story.

The Future of Education Technology Conference returned in person earlier this year in Orlando, after going virtual in 2021. More than 10,000 attended the national conference where educators, experts and exhibitors connected face-to-face. Read about some of the highlights on Page 18.

And what is the future of assessments? Momentum is building for shifting their focus to what students need to recover from COVID disruptions, rather than being used as a tool to punish underperforming schools. Find this insightful story on Page 22.

I hope you find something in this issue that helps you succeed in your role. And don't forget to visit [districtadministration.com](http://districtadministration.com) regularly, plus you can sign up for our free daily emails at [bit.ly/DA-Daily](http://bit.ly/DA-Daily).

*Eric Weiss, executive editor*

## Reasons to visit [DistrictAdministration.com](http://DistrictAdministration.com)

### Cyberattacks, ransomware lead to more school closures

Add computer hackers to COVID and severe weather to the growing list of reasons schools have shut down.

[bit.ly/digital-threats](http://bit.ly/digital-threats)



### Esports remains the best vehicle to reach all K-12 students

The pandemic may have slowed a bit of the fervor, but interest in gaming, learning in schools is still soaring.

[bit.ly/esports-soars](http://bit.ly/esports-soars)

### 3 superintendents tell us what makes the ideal district CTO

CTOs should be a key member of each district's leadership teams, superintendents panel says.

[bit.ly/ideal-CTO](http://bit.ly/ideal-CTO)



### Active disruption: Why critical race theory benefits all students

K-12 educators can validate the lives and contributions of marginalized and disadvantaged communities.

[bit.ly/race-theory](http://bit.ly/race-theory)

March 2022,  
VOL. 58, NO. 2

Publisher Kenneth Kahn

### EDITORIAL

**Executive Editor** Eric Weiss  
**Managing Editor** Lori Capullo  
**Senior Writer** Matt Zalaznick  
**Technology Editor at Large**  
Lenny Schad  
**Associate Editor** Chris Burt

### ART

**Production Director**  
Joe Ciocca  
**Art Director** Rebecca Eller

### ADVERTISING, EVENTS AND CUSTOM MEDIA

**Vice President, Event and Media Sales,  
Education Group**  
Jim Callan, jcallan@lrp.com  
(561) 622-6520 ext. 8696

**Sales Manager (East), Rachel Davis**  
rdavis@lrp.com  
(678) 521-7584

**Sales Manager (West), Paul Milnamow**  
pmilnamow@lrp.com  
(847) 648-0416

**Content Marketing Editor**  
Kurt Eisele-Dyrli

### CIRCULATION AND OPERATIONS

**Director of Audience Development**  
Dana Kubicko

### LRP MEDIA GROUP

**President** Kenneth Kahn  
**Chief Financial Officer** Todd Lutz  
**Vice President, Marketing and  
Communications** Missy Ciocca

### REPRINTS/PERMISSIONS

For more information,  
call (561) 622-6520, ext. 8456

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send email address changes to:  
Dana Kubicko  
dkubicko@lrp.com

### HOW TO REACH US

360 Hiatt Drive  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418  
Phone: (561) 622-6520  
Website: DistrictAdministration.com



## FEATURES

### 10 The Battle for Better Behavior

As more students act out post-COVID, counselors share ideas for easing trauma and boosting engagement.

*Matt Zalaznick*

### 14 Superintendents' Challenging Start to 2021-22

District leaders share the lessons they've learned from it.

*Chris Burt*

### 18 FETC: In-person Learning Returns

Educators, experts and exhibitors reconnected face-to-face at the 2022 Future of Education Technology Conference.

*Matt Zalaznick, Chris Burt and Lori Capullo*

### 22 Making Testing More Valuable

Momentum is building for shifting the focus of assessments to what students need to recover from COVID's disruptions.

*Matt Zalaznick*

## BEYOND THE NEWS

**4** 3 districts share ideas for easing COVID staff shortages

**6** All K-12 districts plan to spend ESSER funds on this item in 2022

**7** 7 education communication and technology trends that offer benefits going forward

**8** 3 reasons Americans say in-person learning is important during COVID

## DEPARTMENTS

### 26 Professional Opinion

5 predictions for how student-led learning will help us bounce back.

*Chris Minnich,  
CEO, NWEA*

### 28 Last Word

Designing a safe school requires more than just built solutions.

*Ben Thompson,  
principal and K-12 studio director of  
McMillan Pazdan Smith design firm*



District Administration (ISSN 1537-5749) Vol. 58, No. 2 is published 8 times per year. A publication of LRP Conferences LLC, 360 Hiatt Drive, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418. Phone: 561-622-6520. Periodicals postage paid at Trumbull, CT, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Dana Kubicko, District Administration, dkubicko@lrp.com. District Administration is a registered trademark of LRP Conferences LLC. Copyright 2022. Printed in the USA.



# No one does more for literacy than teachers.



Lexia® understands the important role educators play. They see the future every day in their classrooms. Raising their hands. Asking questions. Learning. That's why we support every teacher.

We're proud that LETRS®, our nationally acclaimed professional learning program, can help educators confidently teach literacy. LETRS gives educators the knowledge and research-backed tools to help them help their students.

When a teacher can help a child become a better reader, writer, and speaker, a better future follows.

That's why Lexia is all for literacy.



### 3 Districts Share Ideas for Easing COVID Staff Shortages

*“You have to make sure you attend to the human side of teaching and learning,” principal says.*

#### “Keep the staff you have.”

Principal Zachary Robbins’ solution to COVID-era school staffing shortages might sound obvious, but for K-12 leaders it’s been easier said than done since the pandemic began.

“You have to make sure you attend to the human side of teaching and learning, and the human side of human resources,” says Robbins, principal of Cheyenne High School in North Las Vegas, part of the Clark County School District. “This is a time where we need to check on people to make sure they’re OK. This is time to be kind, thoughtful and understanding.”

Robbins takes a unique and disarming approach to keeping tabs on the well-being of his staff: He grabs a broom and dustpan and spends some time sweeping up around his school

and classrooms. “There’s no other purpose than to just be out,” he says. “And it’s an opportunity for folks to share how they’re doing.”

Being sensitive to the workloads of teachers who have had to cover colleagues’ classrooms during the pandemic is a crucial retention tool. Leaders should avoid the temptation to implement any new, non-essential teaching and learning initiatives, Robbins says.

First and foremost is protecting teachers’ planning and collaboration time by not assigning them extra supervision tasks outside bathrooms or other parts of the school. Teachers are only required to enter lesson plans and curriculum adjustments into the school’s computer system rather than print out binders or other documentation. “We’re not going to ask them to take what

little planning time they have to do administrative things we can handle for them,” Robbins says.

Administrators should also empower staff to help solve problems. “When you invite people to share ideas for making the community a better place for teaching and learning, people feel like they’re a part of something bigger than themselves,” Robbins says. “Then they’ll want to stay, even in difficult circumstances.”

#### “A greater sense of purpose”

With K-12 leaders struggling to find enough substitutes, Fort Wayne Community Schools in Indiana has been testing an innovative solution that ties pay to time commitment.

The district decided to leverage extra budget dollars to incentivize sub-



**Is your school emergency-ready?**

Get immediate threat **recognition** and **responsiveness** with HAVRION PROTECT – a collection of advanced safety technologies that performs rapid detection, communication and emergency response.

- ALERT Mobile App & Physical Panic Buttons
- DETECT Active Sensor Integrations
- CONNECT Real-time Communications through Digital Displays

**EXCLUSIVE OFFER**

With the purchase of 10 or more CONNECT subscriptions, receive 6 months of the HAVRION Mobile APP included

Offer Valid Jan 1st thru March 31st 2022

**HAVRION SOLUTIONS**

info@havrion.com · www.havrion.com

Experience fully immersive, safe and connected environments designed to reduce the vulnerability gap and protect life during emergencies.

stitutes to work more. It offered subs an extra \$100 a day if they worked an entire 15-day period just before winter break. A few took the district up on the offer and earned an additional \$1,500, says Kody Tinnel, Fort Wayne's talent acquisition and retention manager. "We still ended up with unmet needs," Tinnel says. "Financial incentives can move the needle but there are still other factors at play, especially with subs who want flexibility because they have other obligations."

The district has also been able to provide teachers and support staff with larger than normal salary increases. Still, competition from the private sector is exacerbating staffing shortages that schools in Indiana began struggling with before the COVID outbreak. Private companies can often offer employees higher wages and more flexibility than public school districts.

This has motivated Fort Wayne's administrators to assess school culture

with tools such as climate surveys and exit interviews. The district is now gathering data about its strengths and weaknesses, with a focus on cementing a culture that encourages talented educators to stay despite challenges.

### TGIF for teachers

A policy that has been in place at the Umatilla School District in Oregon for many years has also been providing relief for staff during the pandemic, Superintendent Heidi Sipe says.

Students in the small district attend school four-and-a-half days per week, leaving Friday afternoons for lesson planning and professional development. At least once a month, teachers meet with members of the district's data team to review individual student assessments to identify children who need intervention. Friday afternoons also provide a lot of collaboration time for staff to take on shared themes that guide cross-curricular planning, Sipe says. "It allows them to feel like they're

not alone and that they're part of something greater," she says.

The district also has "illness" subs—full-time staff members who cover classes when teachers are out sick and participate in the Friday PD and planning sessions. "They know the routines and they know the classes," Sipe says. "The kids know them, so we don't have those experiences where the kids go wild because a sub is walking into the classroom."

Each of the district's instructional coaches is also assigned a roaming, full-time sub who can cover when newer educators are pulled out of classrooms for coaching sessions. "In education, a lot of first-year teachers are promised support from instructional coaches but there are never subs, so they don't feel like they're getting the support."

A final benefit of the roaming subs is that they create a homegrown pipeline and are often hired as full-time teachers, Sipe says.

*By Matt Zalaznick*



**solving<sup>2</sup> succeeding**



### Children learn best by doing.

That's why we create teacher-developed, hands-on learning products. Our new Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Toolkits are no exception. We've combined The Science of Reading principles and a multi-sensory, explicit approach to help K-2 students master key literacy skills.

[hand2mind.com](http://hand2mind.com)



From here<sup>2</sup>anywhere

## All K-12 Schools Plan to Spend ESSER Funds on This in 2022

*But there are significant differences among rural, urban and suburban districts when it comes to the use of ESSER funds.*

How are local districts planning to spend their critical Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds?

The majority—whether in cities, suburbs, towns or rural locations—plan to devote key portions to boost their academic workforce. That’s no surprise given how challenged school districts nationwide have been in retaining and maintaining educator and substitute levels before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there are plenty of differences among those different subgroups when it comes to the monies they’ll outlay toward other needs. They are nicely outlined in a study done by the think tank FutureEd, which closely

surveyed data of around 2,500 districts provided by the National Center for Education Statistics.

For example, while transportation will be a key target for rural districts, it won’t garner nearly the same attention in suburban districts. And both city and suburban districts will devote nearly double what rural districts plan to invest in mental health and social-emotional learning. “The pandemic frequently looks different in a small, rural school district than in a big city or suburb,” said FutureEd Director Thomas Toch. “Transportation challenges are magnified, with fewer students spread across wider areas.”

All locations were fairly aligned in stating they will be focused on sum-

mer learning as well as improving their HVAC infrastructure. Numbers for each category were either at 50% or higher (with cities most wanting new ventilation and air conditioning at 58%). A third or more of all districts plan to further invest in afterschool and instructional materials, with FutureEd noting that a couple of them plan to devote more than 10% of their budgets to improved technology and devices. “The plans could well change over the three years that local agencies have to use this round of federal aid,” said FutureEd Associate Director Phyllis W. Jordan. “But this gives us a real sense of what districts are prioritizing for COVID recovery.”

*By Chris Burt*



# Looking to the Future

## 7 education communication and technology trends that offer benefits going forward.

**1. Using technology to make learning work for more students.** Schools can leverage remote learning technology to provide expanded access to classroom lesson material, expanded access to student support, and flexible district communications in the event of weather-related or other emergency events.

**2. Accelerating technology adoption.** While the rapid shift to remote learning was a baptism by fire, many are now comfortable with the technologies implemented during the closings. Schools can continue to leverage that new mindset for the future.

**3. Modifying IT departments' roles.** Most IT departments no longer focus on helping school staff only. Instead, we host virtual office hours and help desks to support students and their families with tech requests.

**4. Placing more emphasis on cybersecurity.** Remote and hybrid learning has required students and parents to access more cloud-based services, creating risks and vulnerabilities to computer networks. Memberships in associations that share cybersecurity best practices can help schools and districts address this issue. Additionally, IT departments should teach staff and students about the dangers of online security breaches and ways to protect themselves.

**5. Offering virtual meetings.** To accommodate parents and caregivers, schools can continue to live-stream PTA meetings and board of education meetings. They can also offer web-based alternatives for private teacher-parent meetings.

**6. Investing in technology that meets parents' communications**

**needs.** It's important to use equitable technology that allows parents to receive communications when and how they want. Whether it be on a computer, tablet, text message, or email, communication should be optimized for the recipients' preferences.

**7. Letting data guide school-to-family communication efforts.** Having data that allows districts to know how parents and other stakeholders access communication is critical. Using a platform like [ParentSquare](#) enables educators to quickly identify the families they're *not* reaching through regular channels so that they can figure out alternative modes of communication.

*By Jason Borgen and  
Andrew M. Marron*

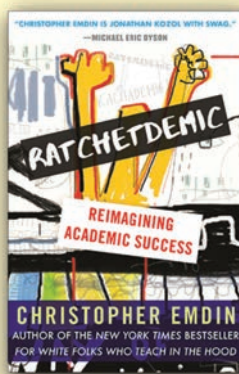
## CELEBRATE THE FULL IDENTITIES OF YOUR STUDENTS, AND DECENTER WHITENESS IN YOUR SCHOOL

"Test scores matter but they don't matter more than joy. Curriculum matters but not if it erases the student and kills their passion. This work is about recovering the authentic self that reaches the authentic student."

### -CHRIS EMDIN,

superstar educator, professor, founder of #HipHopEd, and *New York Times* bestselling author from Beacon Press

**A REVOLUTIONARY NEW EDUCATIONAL MODEL THAT ENCOURAGES EDUCATORS TO PROVIDE SPACES FOR STUDENTS TO DISPLAY THEIR ACADEMIC BRILLIANCE WITHOUT SACRIFICING THEIR IDENTITIES**



"While this book is politically and pedagogically revolutionary, it is really about igniting joy—in our teaching and in our students' souls. Welcome to 'Ratchetdemia'!"

-Lisa Delpit, author of *"Multiplication Is for White People"*



# 3 Reasons Americans Say In-Person Learning is Important During COVID

*More large districts are going remote as other administrators hope to ride out the end of omicron with new mask mandates.*

In-person learning appears to be slightly less important for Americans than blocking COVID, a recent poll has found.

Some 56% of the more than 2,000 adults surveyed said schools should go remote to prevent exposure to the virus, according to The Harris Poll's weekly COVID tracker. The survey, which was conducted from Jan. 7 to 9 as omicron cases began hitting record heights, found that only 44% of adults said keeping students in classrooms was worth the risk of potential COVID exposure.

Most studies continue to show that transmission rates within schools remain very low and that children, especially when vaccinated, are at a lower risk of suffering severe illness from COVID.

Adults with an income below \$50,000 annually (63%) were most in favor of returning to virtual instruction. While more than two-thirds of Democrats supported a shift online, only 37% of Republicans did.

A majority of both vaccinated and unvaccinated adults said classrooms should close, though vaccinated adults were somewhat more supportive of shutdowns.

But in a sign that the public is appreciative of the job educators have done during the pandemic, nearly two-thirds said they trusted their schools to respond appropriately to the pandemic. Vaccinated adults, those earning over \$100,000 per year and Millennials expressed the most confidence in their schools.

And here's how those surveyed responded when asked *how* schools should handle current COVID conditions:

**1. 41%:** Should be remote until the current surge of COVID-19 cases subsides.

**2. 30%:** Only switch to remote learning if they do not have adequate staff

**3. 29%:** Figure out how to hold in-person classes regardless of staff and student exposure risk.

### **"We are out of options"**

More large districts are, in fact, going remote, but most administrators are trying to avoid lengthy closures. Oklahoma City Public Schools went remote until Jan. 18 due to "a significant number of our teachers, instructional and support staff and students out across the district due to illness or other circumstances."

"Even after working to reassign staff at all levels across the district, we have determined that we can no longer adequately sustain a safe and meaningful learning environment for our students," Superintendent Sean McDaniel said in a message to the community.

"This is a manpower issue, and we are simply out of options."

Many other districts are reimposing mask mandates in hopes of riding out the omicron surge that may already be peaking in parts of the country. Hoover City Schools near Birmingham, Alabama, mandated masks in January after administrators determined contact tracing become unmanageable.

While Chicago Public Schools reopened after teachers went on strike earlier this year over COVID precautions, a group of teachers and staff in Connecticut held a "blackout" to raise concerns about safety conditions. The group pressed for schools to have the option to conduct temporary remote instruction.

"We're not looking for weeks of remote instruction—none of us want to return to that experience. We recognize this as a limited approach, but it needs to be a tool," Connecticut Education Association President Kate Dias said.

*By Matt Zalaznick*



# School transportation software helps New York district adapt quickly to the challenges of the pandemic

Jericho School District able to adjust and maximize efficiency of bus routes, thanks to partnership with Transfinder

The pandemic era has been a trying time for transportation departments in school districts around the country, but for the Jericho School District on Long Island, New York, the challenges of COVID-19 have been made significantly easier to manage thanks to its bus routing and transportation platform, Routefinder PLUS from Transfinder.

Jericho is consistently ranked as one of the highest achieving districts in the state, and includes just over 3,100 students, with three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. Lori-Ann Savino has been the Director of Transportation in the district for more than ten years, prior to which she served in other districts in a variety of transportation roles for another decade.

## Improving routing efficiency

Savino says that bus routing is one of the most important responsibilities of her department, and the district has used Transfinder's Routefinder software for that purpose since before she became director. "Part of the appeal to come to Jericho was that they used Transfinder for routing, which I was already very familiar with," she says.

Transfinder provides a variety of intelligent routing, scheduling and fleet maintenance solutions that optimize school transportation logistics, and districts can select which solutions they use based on their needs. Jericho uses Routefinder for routing and

Servicefinder as its bus maintenance platform.

Savino says the software platform is vital to maintaining an efficient operation. "Transfinder saves a lot of time for us in the central office as we plan routes, but also for the drivers because it maximizes the efficiency of their routes. It's a more educated way to manage school transportation."

The district had been using Transfinder's Routefinder software for years and decided to upgrade to the new Routefinder PLUS in summer of 2021. "Routefinder PLUS has been a significant improvement," she says. "It's cloud-based so it's much faster and more efficient, and we don't need to support it with our district IT staff. The system automatically connects to our student database every night, so it's always up-to-date."

## Quickly adapting to pandemic's impact

Savino says that the pandemic has presented a variety of challenging scenarios for busing and transportation in the district. In the 2020-2021 school year, for example, Jericho went to a hybrid schedule of online and in-person learning, so bus routes had to run on two different schedules.

Entering the school year this past fall with full time in-person learning, the district needed to adapt its usual bus routes again to reduce ridership, minimizing the risk of virus transmission. "I had to reroute all



our buses so that each bus had just two students per seat—preferably siblings—while keeping ride times well under 30 minutes," she says.

And after the holiday break, the district was presented with the opposite scenario, needing to maximize the number of students per bus because of a driver shortage caused by the rapid spread of the omicron variant. "That required a lot of rerouting, and that could happen suddenly because the virus spread so quickly," she says.

Fortunately, Savino says she and her department were up to the challenge. "Using Transfinder made these situations so much easier to deal with and adapt to," she says. "If we had to manually reroute our buses repeatedly, it would take us weeks of work. Instead, we can do it quickly and easily. Honestly, I don't know what we would do without Transfinder."

To learn more, go to [Transfinder.com/routefinderplus](https://www.transfinder.com/routefinderplus), email [getplus@transfinder.com](mailto:getplus@transfinder.com) or call 800-373-3609.

transfinder



# THE BATTLE FOR BETTER BEHAVIOR

As more students act out post-COVID, counselors share ideas for easing trauma and boosting engagement.

BY MATT ZALAZNICK

**M**any kindergarteners and first-graders at Willow River Elementary School in Wisconsin simply cannot make it through the school day, counselor Sarah Flier says.

Because of parents' COVID concerns, many of these students were held out of preschool and childcare last year and started school this year lacking key social skills. "We have students who don't know how to do school for an entire day," says Flier. "We are seeing a lot of low stamina. We are seeing a lot of refusal—5-year-

olds are telling teachers 'No,' which is not typical."

Even older students have shown signs of separation anxiety, grabbing their parents' legs when they are dropped off at school, which is part of Hudson Schools in western Wisconsin. Flier says there has been a 53% increase in students being referred to the principal's office for behavior compared to two years ago.

"Third- and fourth-graders are struggling to come into the buildings," Flier says. "These are things I haven't seen

before, and I think it's a result of kids constantly not knowing what's going to happen."

### Starting over

The behavioral issues are largely driven by anxiety over the pandemic's constant disruptions and restrictions on community-building activities such as schoolwide meetings, holiday sing-alongs and buddy programs for the oldest and youngest students.

Last year, COVID restrictions on



# Sora

The student reading app

# Now available: Sora Extras

More learning resources through the student reading app

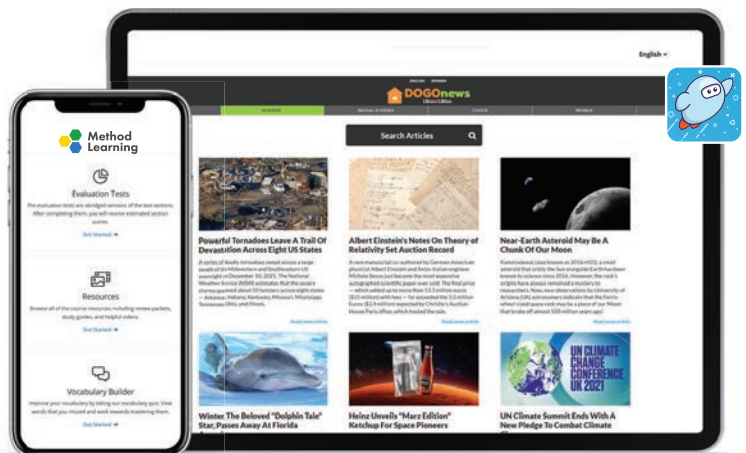
**Sora Extras** is a new category of content designed to keep students learning and growing. These educational resources help students achieve success in the classroom and beyond.

## Inaugural services include:

- **Method Learning** provides comprehensive self-paced lessons and resources that help students prepare for, and score higher on, the SAT and ACT.
- **DOGOnews** pioneered the use of academic current events as lesson plans, and the unique platform helps improve reading, listening, vocabulary and critical thinking skills.



And it's all available through the Sora student reading app – alongside your ebooks, audiobooks and magazines.



**New to Sora? Visit [DiscoverSora.com](https://www.discover.sora.com)**

**Give your students a new way to reach their full potential.**

Visit [resources.overdrive.com/sora-extras](https://resources.overdrive.com/sora-extras) to learn more.

the playground prevented students from getting to interact with students outside their grade. “All that lost social time has really chipped away at their enjoyment of school,” Flier says.

Since the beginning of this school year, Flier has been gathering students to participate in far more social skills groups than they would in a typical year. And she checks in with individual students far more often to gauge their stress and anxiety levels.

Teachers have also received “sensory packs” so they can set up small obstacle courses in their classrooms to allow students to take breaks to do squats and lunges during the day.

Flier has also launched a parent book club to help families learn how to help children suffering with anxiety. She urges administrators to resist the urge to focus too heavily on academic recovery because teachers also need time to rebuild trusting relationships with students.

“When students get into the routine of day, they’re often OK—students want to get into a groove,” she says. “But then, as soon as we gain some ground, they have to quarantine again, and we have to start over.”

**“How to be a servant leader”**

COVID’s ongoing uncertainties have dented students’ resilience, convincing some to give up on school while leading to increased outbursts and thoughts of self-harm and suicide among young people, says Ashley Wright, a counselor at Bradley Elementary School in Texas’ Conroe ISD.

Some of the anxiety is being caused by academic struggles as students have fallen behind grade-level expectations over the last few school years. “Every month, every week, something new is happening, something is changing,” Wright says. “For them, it’s like drowning or dog-paddling—they’re trying to be successful and win the hearts of teachers and win the hearts of parents and they’re being torn in a lot of different directions.”

To solve this problem, Wright has invited parents and students to meetings with educators when behavioral issues arise.

# YOU CAN'T FIX KIDS

## 3 keys to becoming trauma-informed

Trauma suffered over the past two years is one of the leading causes of the recent rise in behavioral problems. At this year’s Future of Education Technology Conference (FETC), Jethro Jones, a former principal who consults with schools adopting trauma-informed practices, detailed 3 steps to understanding why students are acting out and how to better support them:

- 1. Don’t try to “fix” students:** Students will push away when they feel like teachers or other staff are somehow trying to change who they are. Jones shared an example of a struggling student who began to make progress when administrators told her they wanted to help her “win” at the game of school and focus on the subjects about which she was passionate.
- 2. Teachers aren’t counselors:** Classroom teachers shouldn’t be conducting one-on-one mental health counseling but should be referring students to staff and services where they can get help.
- 3. Don’t ask “questions of condemnation”:** Rather than punish a child for running in a hallway, for example, educators should be asking questions along the lines of “Help me understand why you’re running in the hallway.” “You want to get at the ‘why’ of their behavior,” Jones said. “We automatically assume kids are doing something wrong when they’re not.”

“It’s about making sure these crucial conversations are not only very intentional but also intimate,” she says. “We find it’s important that when we have teacher, student and parent conferences that everybody is in the same room.”

This strategy better ensures that educators and parents are collaborating in trying to help a student redirect their behavior. Throughout the process, it is also important to give students a voice by asking questions, rather than just punishing or scolding them.

“What I’ve been digging in deep with students is, ‘Tell me how that behavior is working for you,’” Wright says. “I

ask them what they see happening each time they make that choice and whether it leads to positive or negative consequences.”

This can lead a student to start thinking about how they can change the situation. But it’s also essential to identify the sources of a student’s distress. “We want to find out if a teacher may need to slow down or if a student is afraid to ask questions,” she says. “That is how to be a servant leader—asking students what they need rather than be reactive or punitive.” **DA**

*Matt Zalaznick is DA’s senior writer.*

# VAMOUSSE®



EFFECTIVE AGAINST SUPER LICE

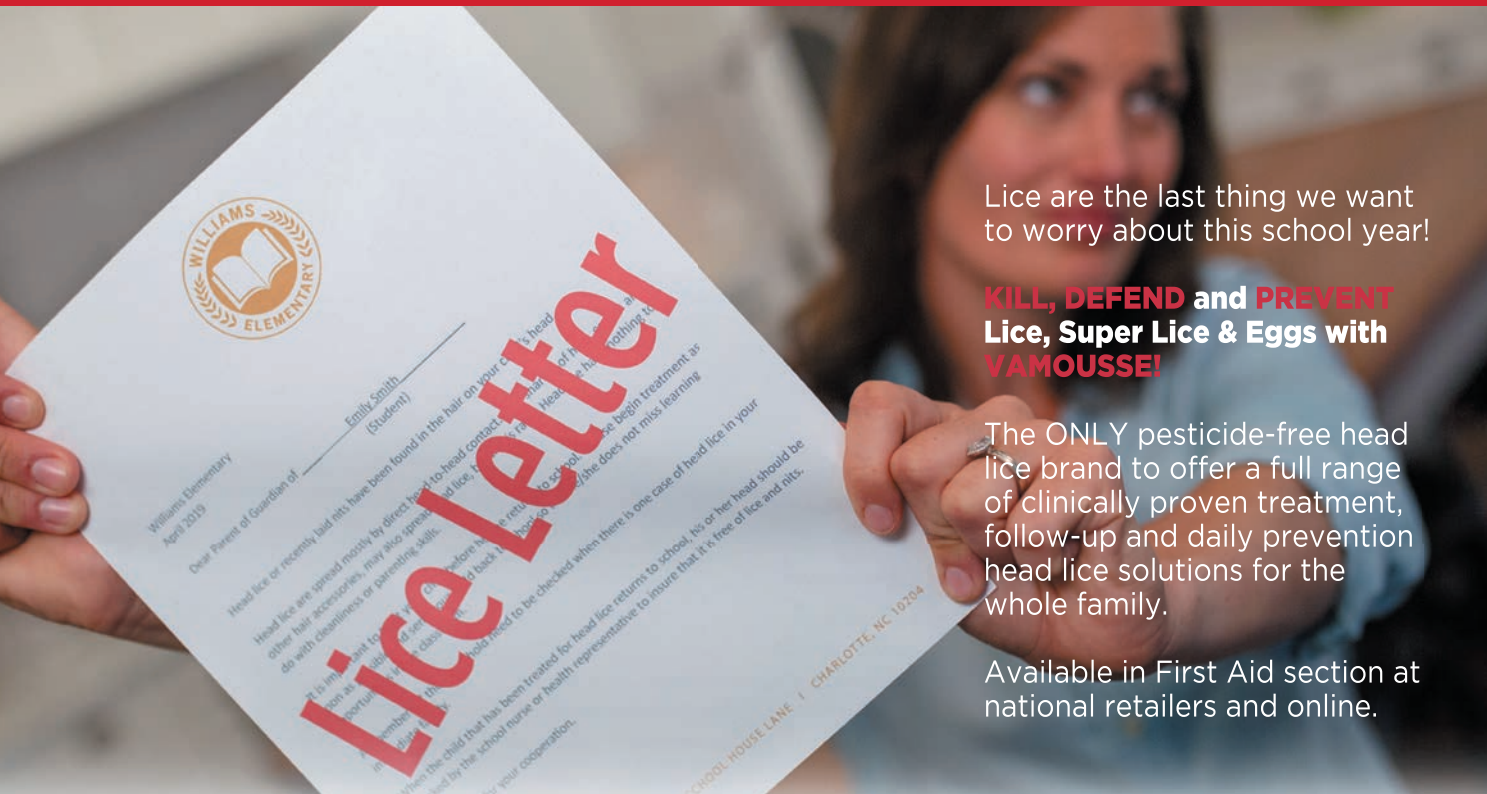


PESTICIDE-FREE



NO PRESCRIPTION NEEDED

## YOUR LICE FREAKOUT PREVENTION



Lice are the last thing we want to worry about this school year!

**KILL, DEFEND and PREVENT Lice, Super Lice & Eggs with VAMOUSSE!**

The ONLY pesticide-free head lice brand to offer a full range of clinically proven treatment, follow-up and daily prevention head lice solutions for the whole family.

Available in First Aid section at national retailers and online.

### LICE TREATMENT

### LICE DEFENSE



Clinically proven to kill super lice and eggs BEFORE you comb with easy to apply foaming mousse.

- Pesticide-free **Lice Treatment Mousse** ends an infestation with 1 treatment.<sup>1</sup>
- **Lice Treatment Complete Kit** includes treatment mousse and lice defense daily shampoo for ongoing lice defense.

For use by the whole family following lice exposure or for daily use even BEFORE an outbreak occurs.

- Pesticide-free **Lice Defense Daily Shampoo** kills recently contracted super lice<sup>2</sup> before detection.
- **Lice Repellent Leave-in Spray** repels super lice from hair at school and in every social situation.

<sup>1</sup> Clinical trial conducted at Lice Source Services, Plantation, FL, Dec. 2015 <sup>2</sup>As shown in lab studies

**VAMOUSSE**

For additional lice information and coupon, visit [Vamousse.com](http://Vamousse.com)

From  
**ALLIANCE**  
Alliance Pharma Inc

# SUPERINTENDENTS' CHALLENGING START TO 2021-22



These district leaders shared with DA the lessons they've learned in the last year, among them that strong leadership and communication are critical to all staff throughout schools.

By Chris Burt

It has been less than a year since Dr. Stacy Johnson moved across the state of Texas to become superintendent at the Banquete Independent School District outside Corpus Christi.

Previously the Executive Director of Leadership at Ector County, she took over the role in June with plenty of support from staff and some guidance from her twin sister, Tracy Canter, the superintendent at Iraan-Sheffield ISD.

Starting any job before a new school year can be difficult, let alone in a district with three schools and 870 students during a pandemic. But for the most part, 2021-22 has gone well for Banquete, with Johnson and her team gaining valuable lessons that will carry them beyond this school year.

"It's had its challenges with COVID and me being new to the area, but one of the huge benefits is that we have created a very strong leadership team; a cabinet," Johnson says. "That didn't exist before. I bring campus leaders and district leaders together and we look at every single problem and work to find

solutions on how to get there. We've been able to refine and create very good processes moving forward. We plan for right now and for the future. That future is ever-changing, with omicron seizing control of communities across the nation and forcing some schools back to temporary remote learning. While Banquete has remained open, Johnson at one point had to help out in the high school cafeteria with other administrators after all food staff there had to be isolated because of COVID-19 concerns. But with unique problems come unique solutions, especially for savvy school leaders and teachers.





**Solutions  
that put  
students  
first**

**With decades of experience serving K–12 schools, we make procurement easier. So you can focus on what matters most — your students.**

**For more information, please contact:  
[stapleseducation@staples.com](mailto:stapleseducation@staples.com).**

Business Essentials | Facility Solutions | Mailroom and Shipping  
Supplies | Technology Solutions | Furniture Solutions  
Print & Marketing Services | Promotional Products



 **Staples®**

Despite all the tumult—from learning loss to violence to staff shortages—what has stood out for some leaders is how well they have been able to respond to crisis moments.

“We're better than we thought we were,” says Dr. Melissa Varley, superintendent of Berkeley Heights Public Schools in northern New Jersey, which comprises six schools and 2,500 students. “Leading up to 2020, we had all these naysayers saying we weren't going to be ready to go remote, and we switched to remote in one day. We had all of our technology set out. We had all of our teachers come in and do PD. We did it all without having to have a long, drawn-out plan. Everybody came together and worked to make it happen.”

## Leading the way

Managing resources and skillfully handling employees, parents and students—by those at the top and those inside the schools—has been a linchpin helping to keep schools functioning.

“I've learned leadership matters, and not just in my seat,” says Dr. Jimmy Shaw (below), superintendent at Florence City Schools in Alabama, which



has more than 4,000 students and 300 full-time teachers. “At the school level, teachers are the most impactful when it comes to student success. But I will

tell you that the most impactful people that you have are those principals. These last 24 months have done nothing but double down to me on the importance of those principals. Communication is huge. Our parents trust us to do the right thing, but if they don't feel communicated with, you cause yourself all kinds of issues.”

Johnson agrees, saying the pandemic and high expectations have made it essential that those lines are always open. “Clear communication is paramount, even more than before,” she says. “Previously, the district

## Superintendents Summits: Nationwide gathering of K-12 superintendents for insights and trends impacting education

Join us and enjoy leadership development, networking and collaboration with a group of fellow superintendents from across the country. You'll hear from highly respected leaders in education and discover solutions to common challenges you and your peers face every day.

Register now for an upcoming summit at [daleadershipinstitute.com](http://daleadershipinstitute.com).

- March 23-25, 2022, Silverado Resort & Spa, Napa, CA
- April 6-8, 2022, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV
- July 20-22, 2022, Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, Lake Geneva, WI
- November 9-11, 2022, Omni La Costa Resort & Spa, Carlsbad, CA
- December 13-18, 2022, Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

didn't even have a Twitter account. We have gotten really good at pushing out reminders through Facebook or Twitter and additions to different apps that campuses have purchased. We get ahead of the curve. We notify parents when there's that positive COVID case, or if they have to quarantine. Being very transparent with them has been a huge lesson learned.”

Banquete also has set up a color-coded system in communications with parents to show them when the virus is prevalent, helping give them a visual sense of how operations might need to change. Being proactive, not overextending resources and remaining focused on families has been a big difference-maker.

“One of the biggest lessons that we've learned is: work smarter, not harder. We're utilizing existing resources and reallocating staff to meet individualized needs of students,” Johnson says. “If we were overstaffed in one area, we reallocated staff to be curriculum specialists and intervention specialists. We've moved people around to be community and parent liaisons so we can have more community voice. It's about creating more learning opportunities for parents and students because what we've learned is that our parents need to be as well-educated as our students are. How can

they support their kids at home? What does COVID look like? What are the things you can do to help if we have an outbreak?”

For all the positive work and outcomes, there are some lessons learned that superintendents hope to see changed as schools still try to rebound from a brutal 2020-21.

“Virtual is not for everybody. We tried to take that model that had been successful and implement it for 100% of our students. It did not work ideally, but at the same time it allowed our kids to have some learning,” Shaw says. “When we came back this year, we really doubled down on learning loss.”

The pandemic has made clear the biggest lesson of all, highlighted by the recent Chicago Public Schools fallout: Students must be in school if it's safe while learning and getting all the support districts have to offer. That's something district leaders will take through 2022.

“We really need to focus on social and emotional learning for our kids,” Varley says. “They need to be in school. We need to do as a unit everything we can to keep them face to face and have the time to let our teachers collaborate. That's one thing we're missing right now.” **DA**

*Chris Burt is associate editor of DA.*



## Spaces designed with your learning goals in mind

At School Outfitters, we know that every school has a unique set of educational goals and challenges.

Our experts work hard to execute custom learning space solutions with designs and furnishings that meet the needs of all project stakeholders.

We'll manage your project from start to finish with expert space planning, purchasing compliance, hassle-free installation and more.

And with our exclusive, ready-to-ship inventory, you can be sure your project will get done on time and on budget.

**School Outfitters is an authorized vendor on these national and regional contracts:**

- BuyBoard
- TIPS
- GoodBuy
- State contracts (multiple)
- District contracts (multiple)

### What makes us different



**Ready-to-ship inventory**  
Find the products you need, in stock and ready to ship.



**Objective-driven space planning**  
Plan your spaces around your specific educational goals.



**Multi-phase project management**  
Work with experts who know how to manage large, complex projects.



**Custom purchase programs**  
Get custom pricing, products and services for your district.



**Hassle-free installation**  
Tap into our network of reliable installers for customized installation.



# IN-PERSON LEARNING RETURNS

Educators, experts and exhibitors reconnect face-to-face at 2022 Future of Education Technology Conference.

BY MATT ZALAZNICK, CHRIS BURT AND LORI CAPULLO

Did you know that, mixed in among all the TikTok clips of people lip-syncing while skateboarding around their living rooms, are some pretty great teaching ideas?

We didn't either, until ed-tech celebrity Kathy Schrock told us—and a packed conference hall at this year's in-person Future of Education Technology Conference (FETC). Check out the AI-enhanced images of teachers morphed into historical figures, she said. Check out the singing Grammar Freaks explaining the difference between “who” and “whom.”

Was it the most earth-shattering or career-changing piece of knowledge anyone picked up at the conference? Well, possibly. But either way, its timeliness, techy-ness and joyfulness reflect the energy surging among educators, experts and exhibitors as they made their own returns to in-person professional learning at FETC 2022 in Orlando.

“The last two years, educators have

been able to take those really hard times and turn them into opportunities for learning—coming out on the other side better and stronger,” said Adam Below, CEO of Breakout EDU and one of Schrock's regular partners at the annual TechShare Live! Keynote

Beyond TikTok professional development, the learning at FETC covered the spectrum, from ed-tech (obviously) to equity to social-emotional support to teaching shortages.

## STEM Saves the World

Television star Kari Byron (*MythBusters*) and EXPLRmedia founder Jenny Buccos said storytelling will inspire the next generation of STEM students to solve problems threatening our planet's survival. With STEM careers sprouting up in about every facet of society, educators must help students follow through on their creativity and curiosity.

“You stand up and give a mini performance every single day,” Buccos told

educators. “You are collaborators, you are creators, you are visionaries. You know your students, their experiences, their backgrounds. You're the best storyteller for them.”

The delivery of that content is key. If you teach about a refugee crisis, don't tell a big story, tell a relatable story, Byron added. “You talk about one girl that's 9 years old,” she said. “When kids watch that, they say wait a minute, I'm 9. I'm playing Roblox on my phone. I'm just like her. And they pay attention.”

## Leadership Lessons Learned

The critical importance of constant communications with parents has been one of the top takeaways from the past two years, Ector County ISD Superintendent Scott Muri said as he and two of his colleagues laid out lessons learned from the pandemic. His Texas district launched and continues to produce a live broadcast, ECISD Live, for YouTube, Facebook and Twitter on a variety of topics.



# Turn the page for **literacy growth**

Discover why thousands of schools rely on Renaissance solutions to accelerate literacy growth for students of all ages, grades, and reading levels.

**Accelerated Reader**   **Star Assessments**

**myON**    **Freckle**   **lailo**

Learn more at [www.renaissance.com](http://www.renaissance.com) or call (888) 252-4398.

**RENAISSANCE**

©Copyright 2022 Renaissance Learning, Inc. All rights reserved.

526558.0222

# IN-PERSON LEARNING RETURNS

"One of the most interesting things we learned is that a lot of parents who are Spanish-speaking in our district weren't getting this," Muri said. "After discovering that they listen to Spanish radio, we started broadcasting there, and that continues to be a strategy for us."

With many parents in California's Cajon Valley Union School District deemed essential workers, Superintendent David Miyashiro had to figure out a way to get them to their jobs when schools shut down. How'd he do that? He declared his staff were essential workers, too.

He went to a print shop and had badges made for his educators. "I called them all and said, 'On your workstation is a badge that says you have permission to travel. Please come in and clean up your workspace and your classroom, we're going to turn them into childcare centers,'" Miyashiro said. "That early opportunity to get out psychologically helped our employees feel comfortable to come to work."

## Embracing Artificial Intelligence

"Is it going to replace teachers? Is it going to automate processes? It's already happening," said Rachelle Dene Poth, a Spanish and STEAM Teacher at River-view School District in Pittsburgh, during her session "Artificial Intelligence in Education: What Do We Need to Know?"

AI could drive more personalized, collaborative and peer-to-peer learning for students as it becomes more widely infused. It also might help schools and students perform better. On the administrative side, it can help improve efficiencies, such as transportation issues. In the classroom, those technologies will help spark more creative learning and engaging conversations.

So, how easy is it for educators to get started teaching and learning about AI? Poth said educators should dive in because it is "fascinating," and it is the future. "You just need to know enough to start and learn along with students," she said. "I really love learning with students

## FETC BY THE NUMBERS

Sponsored Content Sessions in Meeting Rooms



87

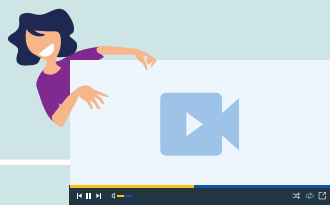
3 Keynote Sessions



10 Special Events

Computer Science Firehose, Mobile Mega Share, 2 Summits, Networking Meet Up, Coffee Breaks, Reception

676 Speakers



5 Mega Sessions

247 Current Sessions

100 Sessions in Theaters

Esports, Tech Discovery, IT, Thought Leadership, STEM

133 Speakers Who Are Book Authors



266 Workshops

5 Content Tracks

and trying to imagine what the world will be like when they're my age, compared to when I was their age in 8th grade in 1984."

## Handling Bias, Racism and Hate

The Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol sparked a barrage of hate speech that

filtered down from social media to students. School leaders that decided not to get out in front on the conversation while taking the safer path and avoiding scrutiny, may have lost credibility with kids, who are well-attuned to news nationwide. They also may have, unknowingly, prevented students from reporting other

## BACK TO THE EXPO HALL

One of the highlights for many at FETC is the massive Expo Hall, and this year's in-person return brought 400 companies to share their ed-tech tools and services. Other highlights included Newsela's Meet the Authors experience and Vex Robotics' field for attendees to see robotics firsthand. Every year, the Expo Hall includes content-focused theaters hosting a variety of presentations. The 2022 theaters highlighted STEM, information technology, tech discovery, thought leadership and esports.

hate and violence, said Kerry Gallagher, an assistant principal at St. John's Prep in Massachusetts.

"They probably know more about more incidents than we do," said Gallagher, who is also the education director for nonprofit ConnectSafely. "They won't even tell us about the ones that we don't discover ourselves, because they don't think that we would do anything about it."

Henry Hunter, principal at Newton North High School, said administrators must react when an incident of hate occurs within the community and denounce it. According to data provided during the session, around two-thirds of educators said they saw incidents of bias or hate during 2018, with racism and anti-Semitism being prevalent. But 90% of administrations did not condemn it.


"The thing that we need to get better

at right now is making sure our students know that we're taking them seriously," Henry said. "Many of them are hard to address, particularly when they're on social media and they're anonymous. We need to make sure that students hear from us that we are that we're doing something about it, that we're trying to provide closure to them, trying to make our school get better so that these kinds of things will happen."

Henry noted that schools must take a more long-term view of racial justice rather than set simple goals. He said schools should "talk about race every day" but should also not try to install massive changes quickly. Adopting equity as a core value and working on smaller initiatives can help schools achieve bigger goals. **DA**

---

*FETC 2023 will be in-person in a brand-new location (and state) in 2023. The conference takes place Jan. 23-26 in New Orleans.*

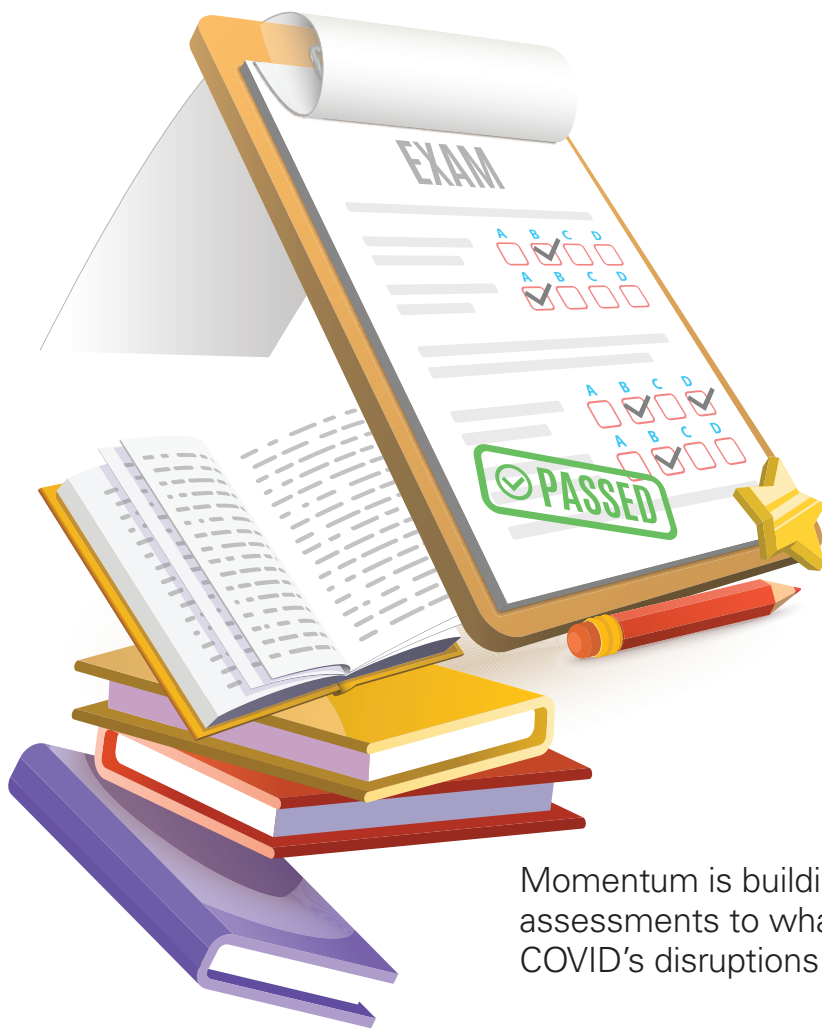


## AWARD-WINNING MEALS FROM YOUR NUTRITION PARTNER?

Districts partnering with Aramark have achieved **operational stability** and **financial success**, and—most importantly—provide **phenomenal, nutritious meals**.

**"Serving Up USDA Foods" Award** – Cranston Public School District, RI  
*Pork Carnitas Bowl over Cilantro Lime Rice with Lime Crema*

**SEE THE PROOF:**  
[k12insights.aramark.com](https://k12insights.aramark.com)



# Making Testing More Valuable

Momentum is building for shifting the focus of assessments to what students need to recover from COVID's disruptions.

By Matt Zalaznick

Here is a big assessment question for 2022: How will standardized tests bounce back from COVID's vast disruptions?

Or will they?

Though many students are likely to spend most of this school year learning in person, short-term shifts back to remote instruction and other disruptions could again chip away at the reliability of high-stakes, year-end assessments. Even if the staggering omicron wave is shorter-lived than past surges and schools recover some stability this winter and spring, there will be questions about whether 2022 scores can be compared to those of 2019.

Steady enrollment and therefore test participation rates could remain an issue for many districts, says Scott F. Marion, executive director of the Center for Assessment, a New Hampshire-based nonprofit that helps districts design tests that are based on learning

goals. "If test scores are a little higher than 2021, which I suspect will be the case, it likely confirms what we saw in 2021—that we still have a long way to go," he says. "And we will have to think about how to analyze the data appropriately to answer questions such as, 'Is learning accelerating more than typical year-to-year growth?'"

Most don't expect that standardized tests are going away and it's likely their role in the coming years will, in part, be determined by the ongoing push-and-pull between district leaders clinging to local control and state and federal policymakers who want to exert authority over K-12 via test-driven accountability systems. But momentum is also building to reorient the testing landscape toward using the data to determine what students and schools need to improve, rather than as a tool for punishing districts and educators for deficient performance, says Chad d'Entremont, execu-

tive director of the Boston-based Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

"No one ever says, 'I hope we don't know anything about what students are learning,'" d'Entremont says. "The main discussion we should be having is not whether assessments should exist but how can we create systems that are more informative, less biased and more helpful to improving teaching and learning."

## Testing what we already know

The current system of standardized testing doesn't provide a lot of surprises, such as when results show that students in high-poverty neighborhoods tend to perform lower than do learners in more affluent neighborhoods. "They're good at documenting large social trends that we already know exist," he says.

On one hand, some educators and policymakers may be hesitant to press for testing to prevent placing more stress and responsibilities on teachers and





**ACCESS CONTROL  
SOLUTIONS  
IN A CLASS OF  
THEIR OWN.**

In schools and on campuses across the country, safety and budget are the highest priorities—SALTO Systems access control solutions deliver on both.

Learn more at [salto.us](https://salto.us)

**SALTO**  
inspired **access**





students still grappling with COVID’s disruptions and trauma. On the other, others in those two groups believe the data generated by testing is needed now more than ever to gauge the pandemic’s impacts.

All education leaders, however, should be working together to set clear goals for their assessment systems. d’Entremont says he hopes that means a shift away from using tests to hold schools and educators accountable. “If you ask most people, they would say they want information on how students are learning so we can better intervene and customize support so they can reach their full potential,” he says. “Our current assessment system doesn’t do that; it doesn’t provide timely and useful information during the course of the school year.”

But the future of testing post-COVID may be driven more by politics than by what educators most want to know about their students’ progress, says Jack Schneider, an associate professor of education at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

“This is not just about testing, this is about state power over schools, and federal power over states and schools,” Schneider says. “And that has been separated from any questions we might have about how students are doing and whether we need standardized assessments to answer those questions.”

And while standardized testing isn’t

going away, Schneider expects there to be a “brokered compromise” between those who view assessments as an indispensable part of the government’s management of education and those who see the tests as limits on school districts’ autonomy over teaching and learning.

This compromise could include a move away from the idea that we have to test every student, every year to generate valid and reliable data. He also expects to see a lessening of the stakes around standardized testing, as the Obama’s administration ESSA “lowered the temperature” from the strict accountability policies of George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind policy. “There’s too much evidence that tying stakes to results of assessment distorts the results and distorts the process,” he says.

Finally, Schneider anticipates that tests will begin to gauge data beyond English language arts and math performance. Exams, for instance, could begin to measure social-emotional learning, student engagement, their sense of safety and how they are developing as citizens.

“If you measure schools only on a narrow basis then you’re just asking for a range of unintended consequences, like teaching to the test and narrowing the purpose of school,” Schneider says.

### **Being clear about the benefits**

The last two years of disrupted testing and questionable results could create a

slippery slope for standardized testing and even an erosion of support, says Paul Bruno, an assistant professor of education policy, organization and leadership at the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

While standardized testing polls high, it’s not an issue to which many people are deeply committed. “If I were a staunch advocate of standardized testing, I would be concerned about long-term political support if it’s hard to justify to people why you are administering them at a time many schools, students and staff already feel overwhelmed,” Bruno says.

This climate could make it essential that educators and policymakers tell a clear story about the benefits of standardized testing. “You can’t just say we can’t fix what we don’t measure,” Bruno says, “You have to be detailed about how you will use specific information from specific tests.”

The most potentially persuasive argument for tests is that the results will be used to provide targeted support to students who need it most, and not for school accountability or even research, he says. “It’s important for school and district leaders to have their own testing policies, to have a clear theory of action that is going to take you, step by step, from the policy you are implementing to actual benefits for students.” **DA**

*Matt Zalaznick is DA’s senior writer.*



## 2 Testing Tweaks

Here are two important ways standardized testing could be made more valuable, according to Chad d’Entremont, executive director of the Boston-based Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

**1** Conducting tests at more regular intervals. This would allow educators to focus on what students have learned most recently and provide data to teachers immediately so they can adjust their lesson plans.

**2** Using more computer-adaptive tests. This would tailor questions to students’ demonstrated level of knowledge to provide more exacting and efficient tests. Such technology could also help eliminate cultural bias from test questions. Students could actually choose questions that ask about concepts that relate to their life experiences.





## PUT YOUR STUDENTS AT THE CENTER OF HISTORY

Students aren't just learning history, they're a part of it. Our new social studies programs reflect that. Instead of seeing a single-point-of-view, students will learn history through the lenses of those who lived it—and be inspired to make a difference.

Put your students at the center of history. One that includes more stories, more voices and more perspectives. Because when students feel seen and heard, they excel.

Discover new 6-12 U.S. and World History programs at [mheonline.com/TeachUs1](https://mheonline.com/TeachUs1).



SCAN FOR DETAILS



## 5 Predictions for How Student-led Learning Will Help Us Bounce Back

After nearly two years of inconsistency as a whole within the education system, educators are understandably struggling to navigate how to get students back on track.

by Chris Minnich

As we head into the new year, we will start to see new norms that include parents, educators, and districts playing a critical role in empowering students to achieve academic success. We have some predictions of what we can expect as we seek to turn the page on the impact COVID has had on education.

**1. COVID caused an uptick in parent engagement; this will be the new norm.** Now more than ever, superintendents, principals and other administrators will play a key role in family and community engagement as schools face scrutiny that calls their decisions and choices into question. School leaders will be the point of outreach for providing their communities with valuable insight and addressing concerns while also helping teachers navigate hardships and opportunities.

We will see that when school systems and leadership offer this support for teachers, they will curate a work environment that is both transparent, caring and maintains positive energy and retention—which will also grow community trust. As we face teacher and staff shortages, strong leadership that builds this school climate will also retain its most valuable teachers.

**2. Students will lead a revolution in learning.** What does a student revolution in learning mean? They are demanding education that prepares them for their own future, not their grandparents' future. This

**"We will see that when school systems and leadership offer support for teachers, they create an environment that is transparent, caring and maintains positive energy and retention."**

will push us toward looking at education differently. This generation of students is galvanized—demanding more individualization and the opportunity to learn the most important things to them, while also caring deeply about how it sets them up for their future.

**3. Students must be empowered to own their data.** First, we must increase efforts to demystify the data for parents so they have not just the latest test score but a holistic view of how their child is doing. And just as importantly, we must continue to empower students to own their data and be critical voices in the decisions that impact their educational opportunities.

**4. Post-pandemic education must focus on building student agency.** The pandemic upended “traditional schooling” and in many aspects what students saw as their role in their education. Our longstanding education system is so dependent on students “just showing up to school”

that when schools went remote, “showing up” became something different. While there were many negative aspects to the pandemic and immense impact on society, one positive is the rise of student agency over their own learning. This is a trend we must build upon. This includes empowering students to be champions of their own data—and ultimately their own student story.

**5. Rapid, quality research will help address urgent needs in education.** The pandemic, coupled with political and social unrest, has deeply disrupted the lives and learning experiences of most students. It has created an urgent need to address long-standing opportunity gaps and has highlighted the importance of providing resources that support student achievement, social-emotional learning, and physical and mental well-being.

This urgency to address the impacts is valid, but it has also created a noisy environment of potential options of what might be best for students. It's critical, now more than ever, for decisions to be grounded in solid research. In the coming year, our researchers are working in partnership with university scholars, school districts and foundations to provide rapid-response research that helps inform recovery policies, identifies high-impact programs and innovations to drive evidence-based decision making that advances equitable opportunities for all kids. **DA**

*Chris Minnich is the CEO of the assessment provider NWEA.*

**ADVANCEMENT  
COURSES™**  
A Wiley Brand

# K-12 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**280+** graduate-level, online courses  
in **20** different subject areas

Education has changed, perhaps forever. With a wide range of professional development courses, Advancement Courses is here to help you face the challenges, from teacher training and retention to improving online instruction.



## Get help with...

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion  
Blended & Online Instruction  
Social & Emotional Learning  
Special Needs & ELL  
District/School Improvement Plans  
Educator Training & Retention



**Train your staff in as little as eight hours** or delve deeper into complex topics in our longer courses.



**Increase teacher morale** while maintaining school/district oversight and strategic alignment.



Save classroom teaching hours and replace in-person PD days with **online, self-paced training**.



**Higher education quality** designed to give your teachers relevant skills they can **apply immediately**.

**A**



To learn more about how we can help your school or get a free consultation, scan the QR code or visit us at:  
**[advancementcourses.com/schools-districts](https://advancementcourses.com/schools-districts)**





## Creating Comfort for Students Through Safety

Designing a safe school requires more than just built solutions.

By Ben Thompson

For students to learn, process and retain the knowledge and skills they are taught in school, a level of comfort must be established in a learner's mind before attention and focus can be given to their best efforts.

So many aspects of school design are aimed at providing that level of comfort. However, design can't provide this alone—it is created through the convergence of design principles, policy prescriptions, and day-to-day routines in the learning environment.

However, there is more required to create a safe school campus than physical security measures—preparation, partnerships and social programs are paramount to maintaining the quality and safety of the educational environment. It takes intention and focus for everyone involved to create the right conditions and the best environment for learning.

### Physical security measures

Incorporating physical security measures into K-12 schools must be done with care and tact; overt security and surveillance equipment can make students perceive risk and feel uncomfortable. In many ways, these measures can psychologically induce the opposite of their intended effects.

“Research shows that schools need to be welcoming and encouraging to draw students into the building,” says Dr. Joanne Avery, retired superintendent of Anderson School District 4 in Pendleton, South Carolina. “This leads to less aggressive behavior, vandalism and absenteeism.”

### Entry points

Creating multiple layers of access supports the administration's ability to control who is on campus. Clearly iden-

tifiable entry points into and out of the building for different occupants (bus riders, teachers/faculty, service providers and parents during school hours) can help limit congestion during typical school days.

If possible, there should be only one visitor entryway. This entryway should have a security vestibule with limited physical contact with staff for visitor check-in. Upon check-in, visitors should then be moved to a waiting area without access to main circulation paths within the school, and finally a controlled entrance with access to the interior of the school.

Devices that control the locking mechanisms of all entrances and exits should be installed. Since teachers don't always have time to lock the door when responding to school shootings, classroom door hardware should stay locked by default.

### Interior campus security

Arrange pedestrian walkways and landscaping to encourage circulation toward secure points when considering the scenarios of campus and building use. Divide the school into zones separated by barriers or doors, breaking academics into wings or “houses,” or providing zones for shared core areas like fine and performing arts, media centers and dining rooms.

Thoughtfully arranged landscaping and fencing can further enhance access control by reducing or eliminating public access to outdoor learning or athletic areas where possible.

### Partnerships help with preparation, prevention and response

Local law enforcement partners can act as a threat assessment team to help

schools to identify any vulnerable areas and develop a facility-specific plan for active shooter events.

Teachers, staff and any adults in the building on a regular basis should have a thorough understanding of all of the protocols in place that prevent bad actors from gaining access. They should also be well-versed in the plan of action in the event of an active shooter and participate in active shooter drills.

### Social programs

Schools should have zero tolerance for bullying and offer support to those who are bullied. It's imperative to also teach students the right expectations, fairness, respect and compassion. This helps establish actions and behaviors that compel them to speak up instead of being a bystander when they witness someone being bullied.

In cases where a student has committed an expellable offense by harming themselves or others, administrators and law enforcement must become heavily involved in outreach and intervention efforts, including offering mental health resources and support for the student and their family.

Creating safe educational environments requires a holistic approach that addresses the social and emotional needs of at-risk students while preparing faculty with comprehensive action plans that take over when the unthinkable happens. **DA**

---

*Ben Thompson, AIA, ALEP, is a principal and K-12 studio director of McMillan Pazdan Smith, a regional, studio-based design firm with offices in Greenville, Charleston and Spartanburg, SC; Asheville and Charlotte, NC; and Atlanta, GA.*



Virtual Multi-Day Institutes

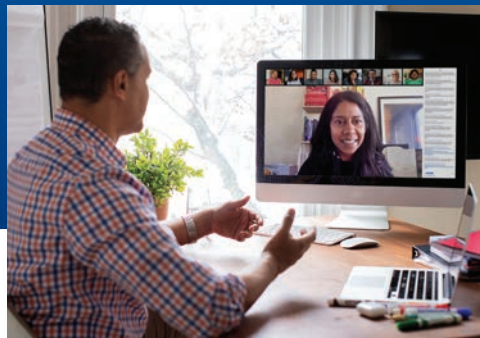
Webinar Series



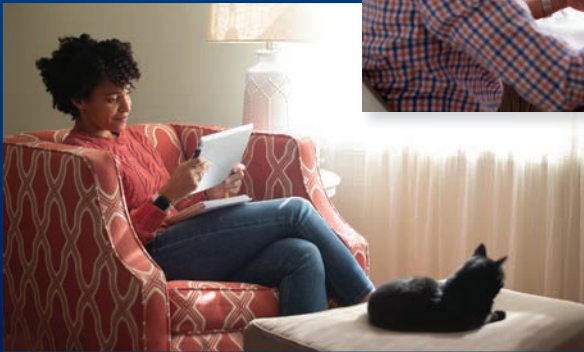
On-Demand Courses



# Lean in on learning.



Consulting Authors



Virtual Workshops



Seminars

Heinemann is committed to meeting educators where they are, supporting their professional growth every step of the way.



Explore our offerings at  
[Heinemann.com/pd](https://www.heinemann.com/pd)

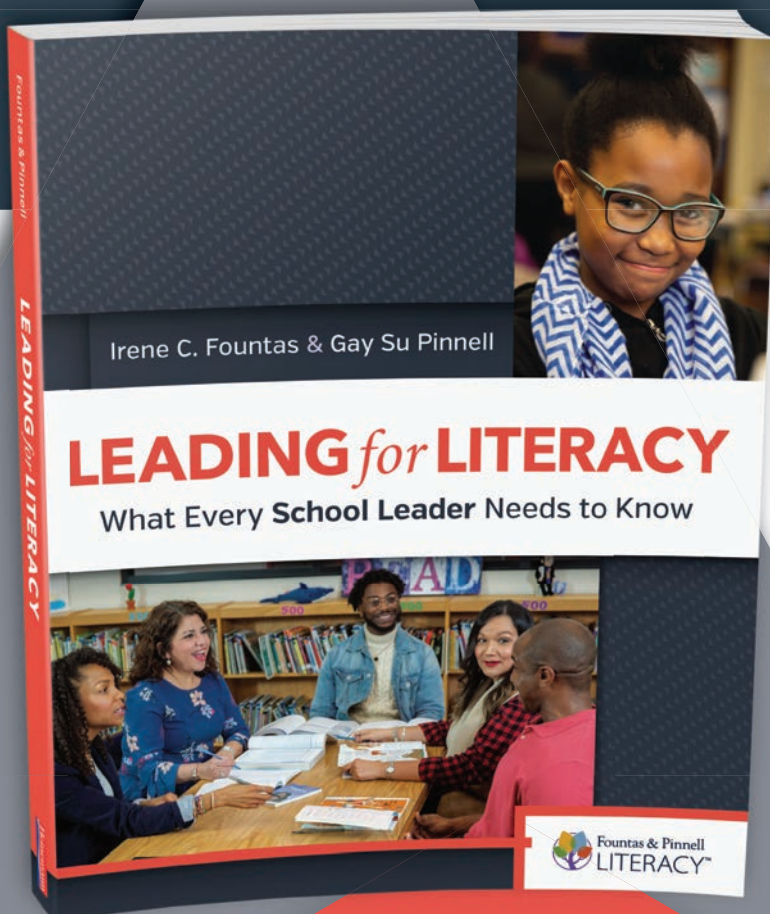


NEW!

THE LATEST ESSENTIAL RESOURCE FROM IRENE FOUNTAS AND GAY SU PINNELL

# Lead students to literacy achievement

*Leading for Literacy* guides school leaders as they create equitable communities of learning for all students.



- ▶ Build effective teams that deliver high outcomes for all students
- ▶ Create a common vision and shared values to create a healthy, collaborative school culture
- ▶ Sustain and scale up systemic improvements in your school or district
- ▶ Implement evidence-based instructional practices
- ▶ Design effective systems for intervention
- ▶ Teach English learners strategically
- ▶ Harness responsibilities and opportunities as a school leader
- ▶ Includes over **30** observation and protocol tools



Explore the workshop

Pair this invaluable resource with the virtual mini-workshop:

***Leading for Literacy—Improving Student Outcomes in Your School (PreK-8)***