



Navigating change

How district leaders are managing the transition to online learning

6

School nurse check-ins

7 actions nurses are taking during coronavirus school closures

20



Jump-start on jobs

Career awareness in early grades

16



School transformation expert on bottom-up change
Q&A with Eric Kalenze 4

Ways that schools can block 'Zoom bombing'
Privacy protection practices 8

Emergency food assistance
Safety and service sustainability issues to consider 28

Learning zones
'Brain-friendly' classroom and whole school design 24



I dream of being a planet saver.



Math is my power.

Math makes dreams come true. An analysis of 8,000 elementary students who completed just five DreamBox® lessons per week showed double the growth of their peers on benchmark assessments. **Dream Big. DreamBox.**

See studies at dreambox.com/dreambig



Submit your proposal to present at FETC 2021

The Future of Education Technology Conference, Jan. 26-29, 2021 in Orlando, brings together thousands of educational leaders and technology experts to exchange ideas and empower participants. FETC® invites ed-tech professionals representing all levels, content areas and specialties, as well as industry and technology experts, to submit an application to present.

By sharing your successful practices that transform learning, you can inspire and encourage other administrators, information technologists, coaches, educators and executives to deploy technologies and expand the possibilities of learning through ed tech.

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, districts have had to make significant changes to operations, culture, expectations, technology and more. It is through that lens that the Program Selection Committee will evaluate proposals, as well as submissions on new and emerging technologies.

Submit your proposal via [DAmag.me/fetcproposals](https://damaq.com/fetcproposals).

—Eric Weiss, executive editor

Reasons to visit DistrictAdministration.com

Free resources during coronavirus closures

Solution providers offering learning resources, services and materials at no charge
[DAmag.me/free](https://damaq.com/free)



How higher ed helps K-12 cope

College leaders offer support with online learning and with feeding students
[DAmag.me/highered](https://damaq.com/highered)

Reorganizing when schools reopen

Making adjustments to the daily bell schedule, staff time and academic programming to enhance instruction
[DAmag.me/reorganize](https://damaq.com/reorganize)



DA Events by color

While reading this issue, look for the colors within individual articles to indicate a related DA event that you may want to attend, as well as the target audience.

- **Superintendents Summit**
current superintendents
- **Superintendents Academy**
aspiring superintendents
- **CAO Summit**
chief academic officers; executive directors/assistant superintendents of curriculum, teaching and learning, and innovation; directors of curriculum, deputy superintendents
- **CIO Summit**
chief information officers, district technology leaders
- **CIO Academy**
chief information officers (CIOs), aspiring CIOs, technology leaders and leadership teams
- **Future of Education Technology Conference**
technologists as well as administrators educators with interest in technology
- **Academic Esports Conference & Expo**
academic, technology and athletic leaders

How schools are rethinking online grading

District leaders looking at pass/fail, “floor grades” and other methods to ensure equity
[DAmag.me/grade](https://damaq.com/grade)

Complete coronavirus coverage

DA’s coverage on the full spectrum of impacts the pandemic is having on schools, students and educators
[DAmag.me/coronavirus](https://damaq.com/coronavirus)



24



8

FEATURES

20 School nurse check-ins

Seven ways school nurses are connecting with students and families during the pandemic

Florence Simmons

24 Learning zones

Designing 'brain-friendly' classroom spaces

Ariana Fine

DISTRICTS OF DISTINCTION

12 Aviation soars to career success

How Wichita Public Schools became a key player in the region's manufacturing economy

Matt Zalaznick

16 Jump-start on jobs

Elementary school educators expand students' awareness about future career paths

Matt Zalaznick

18 Districts of Distinction CTE runners-up programs

Steven Blackburn

Stock photography from [gettyimages.com](https://www.gettyimages.com) unless otherwise noted.

DEPARTMENT

4 On Topic

Q&A with Eric Kalenze, author of a book on school transformations

COLUMN

28 How are K-12 districts feeding students now?

Survey finds districts engaged in emergency assistance, but facing a variety of challenges

Gay Anderson

BEYOND THE NEWS

6 School leaders make quick adjustments to online learning

7 How to make SEL a part of online education

8 Blocking 'Zoom bombing' and protecting privacy online; Industry News



District Administration (ISSN 1537-5749) Vol. 56 No. 5 is published 10 times per year. A publication of LRP Conferences LLC, 35 Nutmeg Drive, Suite 205, Trumbull, CT 06611. Phone: 203-663-0100, Fax 203-663-0149. Periodicals postage paid at Trumbull, CT, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Dana Kubicko, District Administration, 35 Nutmeg Drive, Suite 205, Trumbull, CT 06611. District Administration is a registered trademark of LRP Conferences LLC. Copyright 2020. Printed in the USA.



MAY 2020, VOL. 56, NO. 5

Publisher Robert M. Avossa

EDITORIAL

Executive Editor Eric Weiss

Senior Managing Editor Melissa Ezarik

Senior Writer Matt Zalaznick

Technology Editor at Large Lenny Schad

Associate Editor Steven Blackburn

Associate Editor Marybeth Luczak

Esports Editor Chris Burt

ART

Art Director Rebecca Eller

Senior Production Designer Edie Sutton

Designer Lisa Wedemeyer

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, Rachel Davis
rdavis@lrp.com (678) 521-7584

Sales Manager, Amy Olimpo
aolimp@lrp.com (267) 566-5276

Content Marketing Editor Kurt Eisele-Dyrli

PRODUCTION, CIRCULATION AND OPERATIONS
Director of Circulation and Production Dana Kubicko

LRP MEDIA GROUP

President Kenneth Kahn

Senior Vice President and Publisher, Education Products Robert M. Avossa

Chief Financial Officer Todd Lutz

Vice President, Marketing and Communications Missy Ciocca

REPRINTS/PERMISSIONS

For more information, call (203) 663-0100

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send address changes to:

Lilly Holman
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION
35 Nutmeg Drive, Suite 205,
Trumbull, CT 06611

Please direct questions to:
dkubicko@lrp.com

HOW TO REACH US
35 Nutmeg Drive, Suite 205
Trumbull, CT 06611

Phone: (203) 663-0100

Fax: (203) 663-0149

Website: DistrictAdministration.com



**SCHOOL
OUTFITTERS®**

1-800-260-2776 | www.SchoolOutfitters.com



Custom project solutions designed to meet your needs

At School Outfitters, we deliver more than just furniture and equipment – we deliver enterprise-level project services. That includes expert consultation and space planning, guaranteed purchasing compliance, hassle-free installation and more. It's how our experts seamlessly manage your furniture project from start to finish, whether it's new construction, major renovations or simple classroom updates. And with our exclusive, ready-to-ship inventory, you can be sure your project will get done on time and on budget.



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.



Objective-driven space planning

Plan your spaces around your specific educational goals.



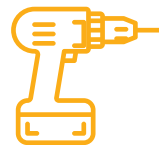
Product & purchasing compliance

Meet your product and purchasing requirements, guaranteed.



Ready-to-ship inventory

Find the products you need, in stock and ready to ship.



Hassle-free installation

Tap into our network of reliable installers for customized installation.

Why bottom-up transformation works better

School improvement relies on the expertise of the educators who are closest to students



National and districtwide school improvement plans can struggle when proponents don't accommodate the needs of individual schools. So says Eric Kalenze, a former educator and author of What the Academy Taught Us: Improving Schools from the Bottom-up in a Top-down Transformation Era (John Catt Educational, 2019, DAmag.me/bottomup).

In an interview with DA, Kalenze shared his insights into why school transformations are often more successful when they begin at the classroom or building level, and are driven by the teachers and administrators who are most familiar with their students' needs.

Why do you call this the “top-down” transformation era?

The book is about a school improvement experience I was part of as a teacher in the 2000s, when No Child Left Behind was in its infancy. We had gotten to this point of focusing on data and scores to drive improvement, and we noticed our district became more aggressive and assertive in rolling out districtwide initiatives through all the schools.

When I left the classroom, I started seeing the same thing in rural, urban and suburban districts. Principals were less about marshalling the best possible improvements for their schools and more responsible for seeing that their districts' centrally-imposed strategies were being worked on.

Why is bottom-up transformation so important?

Each school is its own ecosystem, so sometimes the district-led effort might not fit a school's reality or its needs. In one Minneapolis public school where I worked, they had a districtwide commitment to balanced literacy for early education that allowed certain kids in certain schools to soar because they had the right resources at home.

Other kids came to school and they couldn't even decode, and balanced literacy doesn't provide a lot of support around that. People looked at the results, and saw the schools we're taking off in two different directions.

A bottom-up approach would be a better way to truly understand the needs of your kids. A different approach to early literacy might be necessary but the district says “no, this is the best way, here are your resources.”

How does a school's education team make bottom-up improvement work?

You have to be an expert at making sense of the data you have. Sometimes, we love to admire our data but we don't know what it means. Another big piece is becoming much more evidence-informed in the solutions you choose. Figure out how to genuinely bring your teaching staff into the improvement process. It's about creating committees of folks to work on solutions.

How do you know a school improvement initiative has succeeded?

I don't think there's any such thing as a fully transformed school. What I'm al-

ways looking for is: can you get a school that has a leader for a long enough time? And can you abide by a somewhat consistent way of improvement? Ultimately, what you're working toward is changing the culture. When you can say, 'We're going to get as good as we can at three things a year, and then those three things become how we do things around here.' And next year, you'll repeat the process, and there will be another three things that you're going to get really good at.

A school that is continuously doing that is truly building effective school improvement. It takes a while because you can never see some of the obstacles that are going to be put in front of you. You know you're truly transformed when the right people are sticking around and you are seeing that both kids and teachers understand the way we do things around here.

Why did you say relationships are so important? What kinds of relationships do you mean?

Everything I know about all of this was informed by a principal who was an incredible visionary. In figuring out anything we were going to do as a school, it was remarkable how much time he invested in the relationship piece, and I don't mean he threw a lot of donut parties or worked only on morale. It was truly, “I need to find the best four people for this initiative, so I'm going to walk the building and talk to people and find out who they are.” DA

Matt Zalaznick is DA's senior writer.



Furniture that makes the grade.

13 grades to be exact.



Our singular focus on pK-12 learning means we know kids. We design for how they grow, think and move. It's all we do, so that schools and teachers can focus on what they do. Get a free catalog at SmithSystem.com.

Smith System®

School leaders make quick adjustments to online learning

How districts are managing as teachers fall ill and gaps in access persist

School leaders have already made changes on-the-fly to online learning programs to help students and educators overcome the numerous challenges posed by the sudden, massive transition.

The Northshore School District near Seattle, with 23,500 students, was one of the first districts in the country to close schools and move online, and has since had to cope with teachers falling ill, Superintendent Michelle Reid says.

In “Northshore Learns 2.0,” teachers are delivering direct instruction on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The other two days have been reserved for small-group instruction, intervention and other special services, Reid says.

“Online in a pandemic, you can’t really mirror everything you do in a brick-and-mortar school,” Reid says. “But we feel like we have a nice, flexible culture of instruction that is engaging students on a variety of levels.”

In Virginia, Montgomery County Schools launched online learning in mid-March by downloading lessons onto Chromebooks and delivering them to students along with meals. Students would do the work and give the devices back to bus drivers to deliver to teachers.

By April, district leaders had switched to loading lessons onto thumb drives and mailing those devices out to students with a return envelope for completed assignments, Superintendent Mark Mear says.

“We’re continuing with online instruction and covering new material,” Mear says. “But we have a realization that next school year, we’ll have more



READY TO TEACH REMOTELY—Students in North Carolina’s Dare County Schools, leaders say, have had an easier transition to distance learning because the district has been training educators to teach online for the past few years.

kids who are not at the same level that we’ve been used to in previous years.”

Ensuring equity in the online era

The equity problems that plague K-12 education under normal conditions have only been worsened by the shift to online learning during coronavirus school closures, experts believe.

Educators will have to do even more sophisticated grouping and regrouping of students because some children will have substantial ground to make up, while others who are ready to advance will need enrichment, says Jonathan Travers, who leads the consulting practice area at Education Resource Strategies. “If there ever was a case where equality is not equity, this virus is it,” he says. “The summer learning loss that has been documented over and over will be significantly amplified.”

Along with learning loss, educators in the 2020-21 school year will have to provide support for students whose families have fallen ill or experienced food insecurity and job loss—all while contending with funding decreases

from state budgets sapped by economic upheaval, says Ary Amerikaner, The Education Trust’s vice president for P-12 policy, practice and research. “Too often when cuts occur, they fall more heavily on schools serving the highest concentration of high-needs students.”

Offering parents encouragement

Educators should also offer guidance to parents who are now playing a much bigger role in instruction.

Teachers can encourage parents to expand their concept of how and when students learn. Activities that don’t look like learning can actually be quite educational, says Laura K. Reynolds, dean of the School of Education, Human Performance and Health at the University of South Carolina Upstate.

“That can be imaginary play, free play in the backyard, playing in a sink full of water, or doodling and drawing,” Reynolds says. “When it looks like nothing is going on, students’ cognitive processes are engaged and there’s growing and learning happening.”

—Matt Zalaznick

More online:
DA’s complete coverage of the
impact on K-12 education,
[DAmag.me/coronavirus](https://www.districtadministration.com/coronavirus)

How to make SEL a part of online education

Sustaining social-emotional well-being remains crucial as students and teachers make the challenging shift to distance learning and stay-at-home orders.

In Connecticut’s Cheshire Public Schools, principals and other educators communicate regularly with students and their families, while counselors conduct one-on-one remote sessions, Superintendent Jeffrey Solan says.

“Kids don’t have music, sports, theater or art, and their parents are trying to work from home while our teachers are juggling their own little ones,” Solan says. “Everybody is experiencing this massive lifestyle change, and we are trying to be cognizant of that.”

Administrators have created an internal resource guide for teachers, but have narrowed down the number of online platforms teachers can use to create some consistency across schools and grade levels. “We shifted from a century of brick-and-mortar instruction to remote learning in a week,” Solan says.

‘Deploy, reflect, adapt’

In Tennessee’s Hamilton County Schools, administrators and teachers have tried to give each other—and themselves—leeway as everyone adjusts to remote education.

In the social-emotional learning realm, connecting online has been “a lifeline for kids,” Chief Schools Officer Neelie Parker says.

“Kids really look forward to hearing from their teachers, and teachers like to do their best,” Parker says. “But it’s OK if the online learning is not as perfect as they want it to be. We say ‘give yourself a little grace and assume the best intentions.’”

In Colorado’s Jeffco Public Schools, district-level mental health and SEL specialists developed guidance for teachers to help students and families cope with anxiety.



POWER OF TEACHER CONTACT—Students in the Hamilton County, Tennessee, district and elsewhere get a social-emotional boost from simply connecting with teachers online.

“This is going to be a learning process for everyone, from teachers to schools to families to students,” Superintendent Jason Glass says. “Unexpected challenges are going to emerge, and you have to keep designing to meet the challenge. It’s deploy, reflect, adapt and repeat. That’s the cycle we are in right now.”

Screens provide crucial connections

Screen time, social media, video games, and various other online and digital activities are pretty much the only way students can maintain their social lives under stay-at-home orders.

Parents and educators should therefore not worry too much about how many hours students—those who are over the age of 5—spend on a screen, says Chris Ferguson, a professor of psychology at Stetson University in Florida.

Spending time with friends and peers is developmentally essential for the well-being of aging students, particularly teens and preteens.

“Maybe not everybody knows this, but screen time is very social for kids,” Ferguson says. “Trying to minimize screen time could have a detrimental impact in terms of cutting kids off from social contact.” —*Matt Zalaznick*



www.theKPN.org
(888) 490-3182

National Cooperative Purchasing Program

- Publicly and competitively bid products and services
- Quality name brand products
- Volume discount pricing
- Free Membership

~Available Under Contract~



For a full list of contracts available visit
www.theKPN.org

INDUSTRY NEWS

Brooklyn Laboratory Charter Schools (N.Y.), a public charter school system, has joined the **Educating All Learners Alliance** to support students with disabilities during COVID-19 closures. Members can curate resources and connect with peers online. Virtual “office hours” and webinars are held by **InnovateEDU**, **Digital Promise** and other partner organizations.

The **Utah Education Network** has partnered with **Nearpod** to ensure all 41 state districts and more than 100 charter schools have access to its online learning platform during school closures. Teachers can launch live sessions using videoconferencing tools and assign lessons to students on any web-enabled device.

Pulaski County Special School District (Ark.) expanded the use of **Lexia Core5 Reading** to all elementary schools and **Lexia PowerUp Literacy** to all middle and high schools. Core5 creates personalized learning paths for younger students, and PowerUp helps struggling readers in older grades. An instructional facilitator from each building will monitor progress through an educator dashboard. Lexia experts will provide PD.

Schuyler Community Schools (Neb.) will implement **Discovery Education’s Science** suite. The suite includes print resources, a streaming service, and PD related to teaching with digital tools. Administrators and teachers will also participate in the STEM Leadership Corps model to learn best practices for building a STEM culture.

Calvert Catholic Schools (Ohio) helped **Buckeye I.T. Service** build a team of 3D printer owners and enthusiasts to create protective equipment for medical personnel and first responders. The school also used its 3D printer resources to design the safety shields. The group expects to make 1,000 copies per week when at full capacity.
—*Steven Blackburn*

Blocking ‘Zoom bombing’ and protecting student privacy online

Online classes at several schools have been invaded by “Zoom bombing,” an ugly new activity in which hackers disrupt virtual sessions to display pornography, racism and other disturbing images.

The threatening actions taken by Zoom-bombers “appear to be an organized effort among right-wing hate groups and similar dangerous actors,” says Leah Plunkett, an associate dean and associate professor at the University of New Hampshire’s Franklin Pierce School of Law.

“It is possible that a school could face legal consequences for conducting a virtual classroom in which attackers display pornographic, racist, or other hateful content and words to students,” says Plunkett, who is also a faculty associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

At least two state attorneys general are now investigating Zoom’s privacy practices to understand fully how the break-ins are occurring, while some K-12 schools and other institutions are banning Zoom to safeguard students, Plunkett says. “Privacy with educational technology has been a long-standing challenge, and we’re at a point that it is now becoming an existential need for schools to be able to function.”

Privacy safeguards

During the quick shift to online classes, educators should be wary of adopting new learning software that hasn’t yet been vetted by district technologists or legal counsel. That’s because the user agreement a teacher may be tempted to click to accept probably doesn’t offer adequate protection of students’ personal information, and it might not comply with FERPA and other privacy laws, Plunkett says.

At the same time, many administrators want teachers to be innovative by finding new ed-tech tools for learning.



District leaders should tap their IT teams or legal advisors to centralize the process of selecting and vetting the privacy components of new software. “Don’t just let the floodgates open,” Plunkett says.

Districts should also provide students and parents with student privacy best practices, such as not recording video during online class sessions. “Privacy laws are challenging even for legal experts,” Plunkett says. “In a time of crisis, it’s not realistic to expect teachers to become the experts. Put some guardrails in place. Frontline classroom teachers are going to be looking for resources and you don’t want to have them inadvertently use a resource that is not privacy protected.”

—*Matt Zalaznick*

To block Zoom attacks, instructors should:

- Set a password for every Zoom session.
- Use meeting settings to prohibit screen-sharing by anyone other than the instructor hosting the meeting.
- Turn off video for participants upon entry.
- Lock the meeting right after it starts to ensure that only authorized participants are in and remain in.

The Rise of Behavioral and Mental Health Needs Among Students

Designing a framework of behavioral and mental health support for students

A District Administration Webinar Digest • Originally presented on March 5, 2020



Kate Eberle Walker
CEO
PresenceLearning



Dr. Isaiah Pickens
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
CEO
iOpening Enterprises

Administrators know that academic growth is impacted by mental health and behavioral needs, but supporting and meeting these needs can be challenging.

This webinar presented by PresenceLearning featured Dr. Isaiah Pickens, a licensed clinical psychologist and CEO of iOpening Enterprises. He discussed how to design a framework for supporting school-based mental health services using targeted approaches, implementation science and effective strategic planning.

Kate Eberle Walker: With our network of nearly 1,000 best-in-class clinicians, PresenceLearning is the leading provider of live online-related services for K-12 schools. We are helping schools meet the needs of their students in speech language pathology, occupational therapy and psychoeducational services, which is today's topic.

Isaiah Pickens shares our belief that the best way to help schools tackle a big topic such as behavioral and mental health is by sharing practical approaches that can be put into action.

Isaiah Pickens: We're seeing a historic rise in the behavioral and mental health needs of young people. Research in the 2010s found that about 21% showed signs of some kind of symptom from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Between 2009 and 2017, the number of high schoolers who contemplated suicide increased by 25%, and those who were diagnosed with clinical depression grew by 37%.

We need whole-school approaches. The challenge is executing with all staff members on the same page. We

need to think about how to integrate implementation science in a way that allows us to have buy-in from our staff. Then you're able to focus your mental health and behavioral interventions in a stepwise approach. From an implementation science perspective, schools and districts have the ability to actually systematize a lot of these practices, ultimately changing the trajectory of the academic experience of many students.

I highly encourage thinking about how to address staff wellness. Burnout has been a tremendous obstacle to retaining teachers and related service professionals. I also encourage using whole-school approaches in ways that don't just plug holes. Take a step back and think about how you can explore many of these issues holistically.

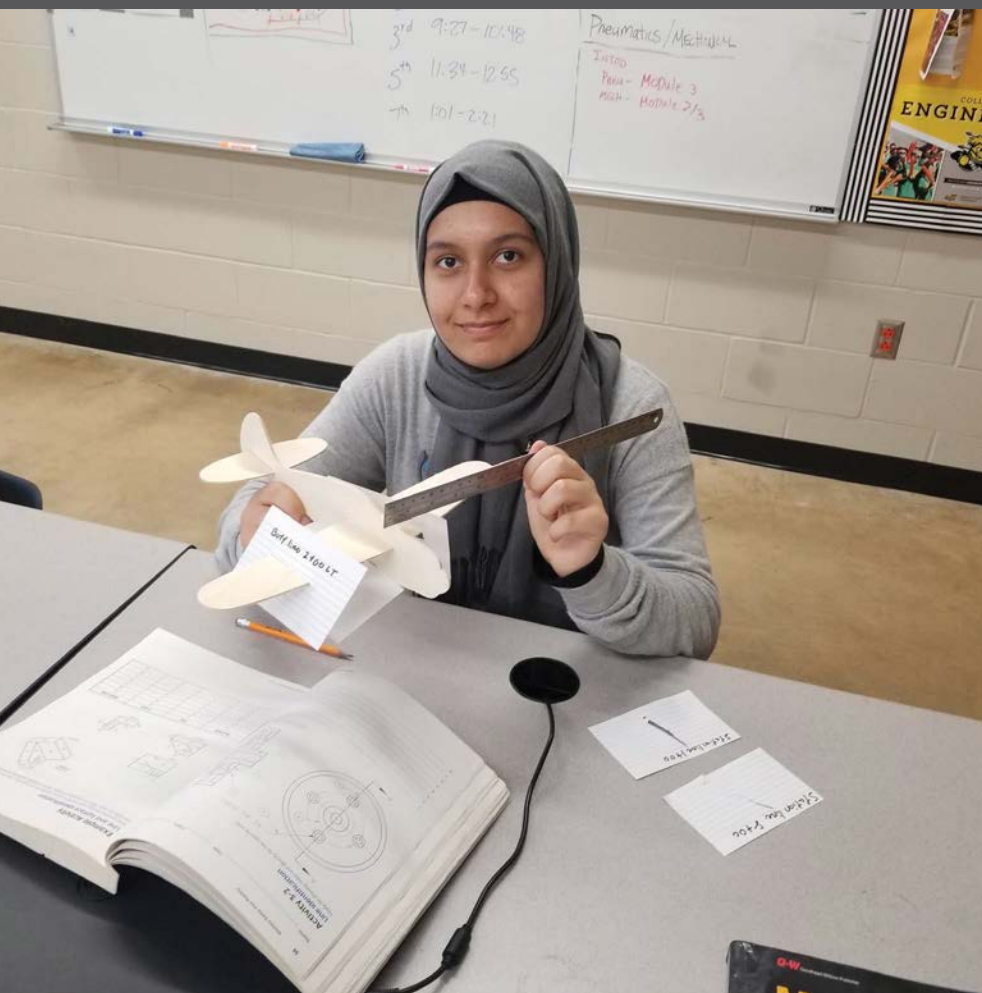
There is great risk and reward to the potential opportunities you have. Students have the potential to disrupt classes when we don't address mental health and behavioral needs, but there's also potential for them to have tremendous success in academics and in connecting with others from a social-emotional space. We can have blind spots about how we connect with students, due to implicit bias, our own experiences, or the students themselves and the things that have happened in their lives. It's important for us to be mindful of their potential.

To watch this web seminar in its entirety, please visit DAmag.me/ws030520





CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION



Category winner: Wichita Public Schools **12**

Feature: Jump-start on jobs **16**

Category finalists **18**

**THANK YOU TO
OUR PLATINUM
SPONSOR**



Istation

for helping us celebrate
excellence and innovation
in K-12 education

GOLD

RENAISSANCE®



SILVER



To learn more about
the innovative programs
reshaping student success
in DA's Districts of
Distinction, visit:

districtadministration.com/DOD

Support learning wherever it happens

Digital solutions to keep every student motivated and engaged.

myON

myON News

 **Freckle**



High-interest books and news articles
for daily reading



Engaging ELA and math practice
at the just-right level of challenge



Anytime, anywhere access
so students can learn both in
and out of school



Get started by calling
(888) 252-4398 or visiting
www.renaissance.com.

AVIATION SOARS TO CAREER SUCCESS

How Wichita Public Schools became a key player
in the region's manufacturing economy

By Matt Zalaznick



TAKING FLIGHT—A high school student in Wichita Public Schools works on a project in the district's aviation CTE pathway. Administrators in the Kansas school system worked with the area's airplane manufacturers to create the program to help fill a labor shortage in a critical sector of the region's economy.

Wichita Public Schools, Wichita, Kansas

District size: **49,851**

Superintendent:
Alicia Thompson

Initiative launched:
2018-19



Airplane manufacturers in Wichita, Kansas, needed qualified employees to fill vacant jobs because the region was having trouble retaining talent.

Graduates of Wichita Public Schools were eager to begin earning decent wages to support their families, while district leaders wanted to get students as young as elementary school thinking about their future careers.

So, industry and education teamed up in 2018 to develop an aviation manufacturing pathway that has resulted in Wichita Public Schools winning DA's Districts of Distinction recognition program for this month.

"When the industry realized how many students we graduate in a year, we became a spotlight for them," Superintendent

Alicia Thompson says. “Our kids have become a potential workforce to drive the economy.”

Creating industry momentum

The pathway allows Wichita’s ninth-graders and 10th-graders to take foundational courses in airplane manufacturing to prepare them for advanced college-level training on WSU Tech’s National Center for Aviation Training campus during their junior and senior years.

These programs, which include internships and job shadowing, allow students to graduate high school with technical certificates that qualify them for immediate employment in the aviation industry.

During the summer of 2019, 30 students worked as interns at Spirit AeroSystems and Textron Aviation. Twenty-five eventually accepted jobs at Textron.

Textron also offered externships to two district CTE teachers and six counselors.

The partnership is crucial because the school district cannot afford to offer the advanced equipment, facilities and specialized instructors that WSU Tech and the manufacturers can provide students, Thompson says.

Textron will also fund continuing education for graduates who become employees and want to learn more advanced skills and technology, she adds.

“This pathway has created momentum,” Thompson says. “Now everybody wants to engage with us because we’ve seen such success with the aviation industry.”

Expanding the pathways

Wichita’s pathway begins before high school. Administrators and their industry partners have formed a group called Dream Keepers that bring workplace simulations into the district’s middle and elementary schools.

“Our industry partners mentor students by asking them if they liked the activities and telling our kids that they can do these professions and careers,” Thompson says. “It helps those kids make good choices about participating.” **DA**

Matt Zalaznick is senior writer of DA.



“This pathway has created momentum. Now, everybody wants to engage with us because we’ve seen such success with the aviation industry.”

—*Superintendent Alicia Thompson*

BY THE NUMBERS

How aviation pathway adds up

Regional retention problems

18,000

Number of employees who have left the Wichita area in the last decade

Acting with urgency

18-24 months

Time it typically takes Kansas’ Department of Education to approve a new CTE pathway

6 months

Time it took Wichita Public Schools and its industry partners to get the aviation pathway approved

Career concentrations

25

CTE pathways offered by Wichita Public Schools

7

Number of career areas covered by pathways

70%

Students taking at least one career pathway



School-to-work

37

Offers of employment extended to students by Textron Aviation during the pilot year

19

Students who are now Textron employees

8

Externships Textron Aviation offered to district employees

250

Students taking prerequisites for the aviation pathway when pilot launched in 2018-19

310

Students enrolled when aviation program was fully adopted in 2019

HOME-BASED INSTRUCTION

Pilot Istation now for progress monitoring, **online lessons** and more in reading, math, and Spanish literacy for PK-8

Helping schools monitor student progress during COVID-19

Discover how to pilot Istation during this time of school closings for access to home-based progress monitoring assessments, online reports, and interactive lessons.



To learn how educators can monitor student progress outside of school, visit

info.istation.com/DA





All Heroes Start Somewhere

Computer-Adaptive Intervention and Instruction

Based on scientific evidence and comprehensive research, Istation's formative assessments, adaptive curriculum, personalized data profiles, and flexible teacher resources help schools measure growth and introduce new skills for reading, math, and Spanish literacy. Plus, educators get easy-to-understand feedback that is timely, specific, and constructive.

Powered by the science of reading, Istation's engaging assessments and instruction cover the National Reading Council's "Big Five" foundational essentials. Schools get the support they need to improve comprehension and growth with activities and lessons that provide actionable and insightful data that measures phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary, as well as many other skills.

Innovative Oral Reading Fluency Assessment

Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP™) digital Oral Reading Fluency assessment combines over three decades of educational research with more than a decade of technical development and data through a partnership with Boulder Learning, Inc. This pioneering effort in the use of speech recognition technology in education includes digital recording programming to help schools measure oral reading fluency, accuracy, and more.

Mixing teaching and technology, Istation's comprehensive blended learning approach helps schools differentiate instruction and support intervention for powerful growth.

To learn how educators can monitor student progress outside of school, visit

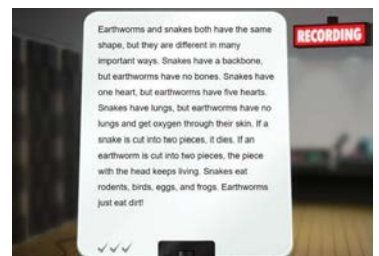
info.istation.com/DA



Game-like assessments

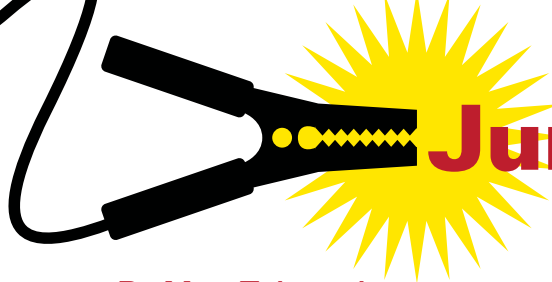


Interactive lessons



Digital oral reading fluency assessment





Jump-start on JOBS

By Matt Zalaznick

How elementary school educators expand students' awareness about future career paths



MEASURES OF SUCCESS—Students at Powell Valley Elementary School in Gresham, Oregon, work on a career-oriented project that educators designed with an eye toward the skills needed after high school graduation.

Educators don't expect elementary school students to know exactly what they want to be when they grow up. But to raise students' aspirations and introduce them to factors that go into that big decision, some districts are adding career awareness in the early grades.

Elementary students are learning concepts such as the cost of living and the various levels of postsecondary education.

"We're helping students dream big," says Melissa Miller Kincart, director of strategic partnerships and college and career readiness at Rapid City Area Schools. The South Dakota district recently launched a wide-ranging K-12 college and career readiness initiative. "We're planting ideas around why they're in school," Kincart says. "The things they like and are studying can lead to what they do in their future."

Early career opportunities

Career awareness in the early grades poses questions about equity in the Gresham-Barlow School District near Portland, Oregon. All students should have the advantage gained by kids who learned early on—most likely from their college-graduate parents—how important a degree is to a successful career, says Carla Gay, the district's executive director of innovation and partnerships. "Our job is to broaden their worldview of what their opportunities and options are—and we need to do that early and often. We want to expose them to a broader world of work than they may be exposed to in their homes and communities."

In designing pre-K and elementary-level career awareness programs, educators started with the end goals of post-graduation success. Then, they took advantage of districtwide renovations to create a construction career pathway. Representatives of the building contractor spent four months with teachers creating project-based lessons on the construction industry.

This partnership allowed groups of



SHARE: DAmag.me/jumpstart

More content on curriculum and instruction:

DAmag.me/instruct

 **DISTRICTS OF
DISTINCTION**

students to come up with several design proposals for an outdoor learning space, complete with benches, that they pitched to the contractors.

This year, the district added a pathway in multimedia that's allowing students to team up with local professionals to organize a year-end celebration for an elementary school that's closing.

Fifth-graders are producing a video about the school, while fourth-graders are working with an architect to envision future uses for the school site. Third graders are working with an event planner, while first and second graders are using a 3D printer and laser cutters to make commemorative snow globes. Kindergarteners are creating coloring books that will be printed by district high school students.

"We're taking advantage of opportunities as they present themselves," Gay says. "And we're training teachers to integrate these opportunities into content standards."

Visiting the reality store

In career awareness lessons at A.J. Lindeman Elementary in Kentucky, fifth graders get the chance to start acting like adults. Part of the Erlanger/Elsmere School District, the school matches students' personal learning styles and interests with different careers. Then the students visit the "reality store," given a certain amount of money each that matches the salaries of jobs such as police officer, social worker, carpenter or doctor. At different stations, they pay for housing, transportation, health care and entertainment.

In balancing wants and needs, students face decisions such as what they would do if they needed emergency medical treatment, says counselor Kathy Koerner. "They get super-excited when they are given money and are able to walk around to different stations." The "doctors" find they can get whatever they want, while "counselors" or "mechanics" find their money goes fast.

K-5 students also do in a "career walk," an extension of the school career fair. A volunteer visits each classroom to talk about their career and how they got there. Each class makes a poster about the career to share with the rest of the school, Koener says. "They're connecting how much work they're willing to put into school with how much they'll earn later in life."

'Career cruising'

Near Dallas, students in Grand Prairie ISD engage regularly in "career cruising" activities. They use Xello software to begin matching interests and favorite subjects to career paths, says Dana Jackson, executive director of counseling services. Fifth graders do research about these professions and create science-fair-like displays to share with younger students at career fairs.

Elementary students can also participate in mock job interviews that will allow them to job-shadow principals, school nurses, P.E. coaches and other personnel. They learn key interview skills such as how to dress and how to speak clearly, Jackson says. Such activities are particularly important in a district with a high population of students on free lunch. Educators want students to know about professions, such as graphic design and auditing, that they may not come into contact with, Jackson says. "We want to expose them to careers they may not see in their community. And let them know that college and careers are in their future—that the sky's the limit."

Because Grand Prairie is a district of choice, educators await younger students and their families to begin looking ahead to choosing a high school career pathway. The district's high schools offer pathways in STEM, fine arts, leadership, culinary arts, health care and other fields, Jackson says. "It's never too early to start feeding the bigger possibilities into kids." **DA**

Matt Zalaznick is DA's senior writer.

Career awareness, grade by grade

Rapid City Area Schools in South Dakota offers a wide-ranging K-12 college and career readiness program. Here's what it looks like in elementary school:

Younger students:

In kindergarten through 2nd grade, students begin envisioning their futures by creating college pennants and reading books about the experiences they may have on campus.

Older students:

In grades 3 to 5, students learn about the amount of training, from industry certifications to four-year degrees, that various careers require.

Teaching techniques: Teachers integrate college and career

awareness into everyday instruction by, for instance, connecting math and science skills to different occupations.

Planning for the future: All of these activities lead to deeper career exploration in middle school and the district's high school career pathways, which don't all steer students toward a four-year campus.

The vision: "We're hoping kids see college as any type of training opportunity that comes after high school. We want them to be thinking that what they're doing now will affect their future, and that they're going to graduate with a plan."

*—Melissa Miller Kincart,
director of strategic partnerships
and college and career readiness*

WANT TO SHARE HOW YOUR DISTRICT IS USING TECHNOLOGY to support CTE? Submit a proposal to speak at FETC 2021, Jan. 26-29 in Orlando. **DAmag.me/fetcproposals**

DISCUSS CTE AND OTHER CURRICULAR TOPICS with peers from across the country at an upcoming DA CAO Summit. **DAmag.me/CAOevents**

Districts of Distinction Career and Technical Education programs

Four K-12 districts being honored by DA as Districts of Distinction runners up for developing innovative CTE programs

By Steven Blackburn

SISD COMMUNITY EDUCATION/ CTE COLLABORATIVE

Socorro Independent School District (Texas), sisd.net

CHALLENGE: Officials wanted to connect workforce training services to adult education learning services, but there limited funding to serve the state-required number of students through contracted post-secondary institutions.

INITIATIVE: In 2016-17, the district's Community Education and Career and Technical Education departments created a program where students can take free courses to pursue training and earn certifications in high-demand occupations in the El Paso region—such as computer repair and dental assistant jobs. The collaboration allows the adult education program to benefit from CTE resources, such as teachers and labs.

IMPACT: Over three years, 250 students have earned industry-recognized credentials or licenses. “Our graduates are either advancing with their current employer or changing careers in the industry related to their certification,” says Anthony Fraga, community education director.

STEVENSON MADE: ACADEMY OF MANUFACTURING, AUTOMATION, AND DESIGN ENGINEERING

Utica Community Schools (Mich.), uticak12.org

CHALLENGE: The district wanted to meet local industry needs for a highly skilled workforce and for students to see that skills taught in school are needed for success later.

INITIATIVE: In 2019-20, administrators worked with industry leaders to create a pathway to careers in automation, design engineering, and welding and machining. Students participate in advanced manufacturing projects designed with business leader input. Business leaders provide field experience for students and come to speak at schools.

IMPACT: Each of the four high schools have created similar academies that demonstrate real-world relevance and support Michigan's goal to reduce the skills gap between education and business. As the effort moves toward a full program for grades 9 through 12, 88 freshmen enrolled this year. “Stevenson MADE has provided students and families a voice and a choice on their learning styles and pathways,” says Superintendent Christine Johns.

MT. HEALTHY CITY SCHOOL AND LSI STEM COLLABORATIVE

Mt. Healthy City School (Ohio), mthcs.org

CHALLENGE: With a large at-risk population, officials wanted to increase student attendance, engagement and overall attitude and respect. A local business, LSI Industries, needed reliable employees.

INITIATIVE: In 2018-19, the district launched a program that allows all students to work at LSI in the summer and on Saturdays during the school year, regardless of their GPA or school attendance record. Students are paid \$13 per hour and the district provides transportation. On Saturdays, students make time-and-a-half and earn double-time if they make meet quotas. “This initiative has ignited an interest in our students and a drive to improve their attitudes,” says STEAM lead Robin McGinnis.

IMPACT: Participation has grown from six to 30 students, and school attendance has increased from 60% to 90%. Meanwhile, LSI has caught up on backlogged orders. “Students are learning the importance of showing up to work on time and being dependable,” says McGinnis.

CONRAD WEISER SCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Conrad Weiser Area School District (Pa.), conradweiser.org

CHALLENGE: Over the next decade, seven in 10 new jobs in the commonwealth will likely require workers to use a computer, and an estimated 300,000 STEM jobs will be available this year. “Investment in workforce preparation in fields of demand is paramount,” says Assistant Superintendent Ryan Giffing.

INITIATIVE: The program has established a framework for integrating learning in STEM and computer science to serve as a model for other schools. Students are improving their literacy, communication and entrepreneurship skills with business and industry leaders. A major goal is to document the first comprehensive intellectual property policies in the U.S. “Our initiative curricular scope and sequence will revolutionize the role of STEM and computer science in our educational system,” says Giffing.

IMPACT: More than 60 university, business, industry, government and nonprofit entities have joined the Science Research Institute. In 2017-18, students amassed \$1.4 million dollars in trips, financial awards and scholarships. The following year, 300 middle schoolers and 137 high schoolers engaged in research projects. “These students are the future STEM and computer science entrepreneurs of our country,” says Giffing. **DA**



How to Implement Predictive School Operations

Gaining insight into important facilities data

A District Administration Web Seminar Digest • Originally presented on March 10, 2020



Chris Fierer
Director of Data & Analytics
Dude Solutions

Many school administrators don't have adequate access to or insight into the crucial data needed to make informed decisions about their facilities operations. As a result, many districts operate reactively, which is inefficient and expensive. Predictive school operations is key to maximizing efficiency. By using the right data effectively, administrators can forecast future needs and allocate resources more strategically.

This web seminar discussed how to implement predictive school operations in a district, and how this strategy can help administrators in any school system maximize their time, budget and resources.

Chris Fierer: More and more in our everyday lives, we see data permeating everything. And there's always the question: What can we do with that data?

In schools, we look at student performance data and teacher performance data. We also look more broadly at basic budgetary guidance and economic data that helps different cities, regions and states make decisions about how they continue to maintain schools.

How do you set the right foundation for your team and operations? Ultimately, you want richer reporting and improved decision-making for your organization. A lot of the answer lies in how you're supporting change management and driving efficiencies. As an individual and as a team, you want to ask yourself: "Where have I been? Where am I today? Where am I headed?" Next is thinking about the mission you're on. How is what you're doing affecting your people on a day-to-day basis, both directly and indirectly?

Following up on those questions, you want to look at

three things: What reports, what dashboards and what key performance indicators (KPIs) do we want to begin to measure? What kind of information do we need to pull together so that we can start to discuss the questions we had earlier? The dashboard provides a heads-up display of everything going on that may be related to a certain question. KPIs are the different metrics and insights that we're tracking to improve our organization. We want to make sure that we're measuring the right stuff. How do we as a team make something better and push ourselves to improve an area of our organization?

Our industry is always changing, and you're consistently being asked to do more with less. Using data and software is a great way to make your teams more efficient. When you have to do more with less, that means you have to figure out exactly where to put your time and attention. Data can help.

In addition, this is a tremendous opportunity for predictive operations. We want to help you think about your place in the school facilities-operations story—and how it fits into a bigger story that includes other teams at your organization or other campuses around the country—by using data from both a qualitative and quantitative standpoint.

To watch this web seminar in its entirety, please visit DAmag.me/ws031020



School nurse check-ins ✓

7 ways
school nurses are
connecting with
students and families
during the pandemic

By Florence Simmons



GETTYIMAGES.COM: LUNAR_CAT

The school nurse's role in response to COVID-19 at its initial outbreak in the U.S. was one of surveillance of students and staff for symptoms of the disease. But as confirmed cases grew and more districts closed schools, that role evolved, says Kathleen A. Hassey, director of the School Health Academy and an affiliate associate professor at Northeastern University in Boston.

Now, school nurses are playing a key part in delivering essential medications and medical equipment to students. They're reaching out to families of students with chronic health conditions to connect them with needed supports. "And, they will be vital when schools reopen to make sure procedures are in place to keep everyone safe," Hassey says.

Here are seven ways school nurses have stepped up to help at-risk students and their communities during this time, using platforms ranging from direct emails and phone calls to website postings, videos and telehealth appointments.

1. Returning school-stored medication to students

The first concern for many school nurses in the face of school closures is getting medications and medical equipment stored at school back to families, says Hassey.

Access to medication could be crucial for a student, adds Linda Kimel, a certified school nurse for Rockford Public Schools in Illinois. This is especially the case for stimulants such as ADHD or seizure medications that are controlled substances and not easy to refill.

Kimel worked with her school administration to arrange a pick-up day for parents. Her two schools were already closed to students, and parents were not allowed to enter. Instead, they called Kimel to alert her when they arrived. She then took the medication outside and verified the identity of each parent, examining an ID held up to the car window. "I would set the medication outside the car door and go back inside," she says. "Then they would open the car door and pick it up."

2. Checking-in on students with chronic health conditions

Nurses are calling students with chronic health conditions such as diabetes or asthma to make sure they have needed resources and supplies, Hassey says.

"As part of providing case management, school nurses are experts in locating local resources for their students and families," says Louise Wilson, school nursing and health services consultant at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. If they discover students are missing necessary supplies or medications, school nurses are taking steps to determine if such items are at school and could be safely delivered,



SHARE:
[DAmag.me/schoolnurse](https://www.dmag.me/schoolnurse)

More online: Platforms used for virtual school nursing
More coverage on health and wellness: [DAmag.me/health](https://www.dmag.me/health)

mailed, or picked up using social distancing, she adds.

Nurses in Wisconsin and beyond also are helping families connect with local resources, such as through the national 2-1-1 helpline, and charities that might help with the purchase of items and medications.

3. Distributing lunches

Taking part in delivering free school lunches gives nurses another opportunity to check in on students and their families, particularly students who are considered at risk.

For example, Marie DeSisto—a nursing instructor at Cambridge College in Boston who teaches a health office management class to school nurses—says one of her students helped with delivering lunches to children with free and reduced meal plans and with medical needs. She was able to leave the food at the students' front step and talk with families through the door.

"We are a face most of our students recognize," says Kimel of Rockford schools. "We can wave or give a thumbs up through the window without risk to any of us. It's another way we're indirectly reaching out."

4. Working with other medical professionals

Some nurses are partnering with the public health nurses in their local area to answer phone calls and provide health information and physician contacts, DeSisto says. A few school nurses in Massachusetts are also members of the state Medical Reserve Corps. As volunteers, they help with a variety of tasks, such as organizing and providing supplies for facilities that need them, she explains.

"School nurses are working with their local boards of health, especially with tracking COVID-19 cases and follow-up calls," Hassey says. "Many are now trained on the statewide system for tracking communicable diseases."

5. Donating supplies

With permission, school nurses have donated their gloves, gowns, masks and other needed items to local hospitals and clinics, Hassey says.

As Kimel notes, if schools are shut down for the rest of the year nurses will be able to donate extra masks and gloves to nursing homes and health care providers. "I have nine boxes of gloves," she says. "I can certainly donate seven of them." School nurses should just be sure to have enough for the beginning of the next school year.

6. Revising student care plans

School nurses also can use this time to look ahead and review care plans for students with chronic health conditions, Wilson said.

The National Association of School Nurses agrees. Its publication, titled "Ideas for School Nurse Activities During the COVID-19 Pandemic," states that these professionals should "review records of students with chronic conditions who may need 504 accommodations, individualized healthcare plans, or emergency care plans for the coming year or who are transitioning to a new school in prepara-

tion for when schools reopen; and begin the processes now."

7. Answering questions and providing reassurance

Parents in Kimel's school district have her email address so they can contact her with any questions or concerns they have.

"A lot of parents, especially those with vulnerable kids, are scared," she says. "If they've built a good relationship with the school nurse, they will trust her to give them accurate, reasonable information. Nurses can be a sounding board for reassurance, providing information, and promoting compliance with social distancing while minimizing panic." **DA**

Florence Simmons covers Section 504, paraprofessionals and transportation for Special Ed Connection, a DA sister publication. Subscribers to Special Ed Connection can access additional stories and guidance on this topic via specialiedconnection.com.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION:

Creative ideas for using mass notification systems during COVID-19 school closures

Mass notification approaches have been evolving—along with every other aspect of school district leadership—as learning has shifted from school to home. For example, in a large school system in North Carolina, mass emails were used to deliver messages on behalf of local health agencies, in consultation with school nurses, explains Nate Brogan, president of notification services at Intrado, provider of the SchoolMessenger platform. "School districts are finding it invaluable to have a way to quickly reach very large audiences with a consistent message in multiple languages," he says.

Blackboard, which offers the Blackboard Mass Notifications platform for K-12, has found that districts are updating families frequently. "With voice messages, some districts have found success using familiar, recognizable voices for

recordings to instill trust and garner optimal engagement, retention and attention," says Christina Fleming, vice president of K-12 product management and marketing.

SchoolMessenger is delivering millions of messages per hour, says Brogan. Ideas worth modeling include:

- Sending messages with instructions about picking up free meals
- Using survey functionality within the system
- Sending parents automated alerts if students don't participate in distance learning courses
- Utilizing unified messaging capabilities to instantly post instructions on school websites
- Sending targeted messages to families to provide reassurance and let students know they are missed

—Melissa Ezarik

Utilizing the High Reliability Schools Model and PLC at Work to Improve Learning

Driving continuous improvement across five key areas

In this webcast, Solution Tree expert Cameron L. Rains discussed how to harness the power of the PLC at Work® process, in tandem with the High Reliability Schools™ (HRS) framework, to drive continuous improvement in a school district across five key areas:

1. a safe, supportive and collaborative culture
2. effective instruction in every classroom
3. a guaranteed and viable curriculum
4. standards-referenced reporting
5. competency-based education

Rains outlined how each of these five areas positively impacts students, teachers and parents.

Cameron L. Rains: PLCs have been around for over 20 years. They are about three big ideas that will shift our culture.

First, learning is the fundamental purpose of schooling. It's why schools exist. It's why we have kids who come through our doors every day. We have to ensure that they're learning and learning at high levels. Second, we're going to do that in a collaborative culture. We're going to open our doors, work together, lock arms and get the job done for kids. In a PLC, there is no such thing as my kids and your kids. All of the students are all of our kids. Third, we work hand in hand to ensure results. We are results-oriented, and we continuously monitor our progress. All the decisions we make—from day to day to minute by minute—will be based on what's likely to produce better results for the students we have the privilege of serving.

You can't overemphasize the importance of collaborative teams. Together, they are the building blocks of PLCs. They are the primary vehicle for getting the work done, and the

work they do is important. How do we know what that work is? There are four PLC model questions:

1. What do we want our students to learn or know? That's a curriculum question.
2. How will we know if students are learning? That's an assessment question.
3. How do we respond when some students are not learning? That's an instructional question.
4. How do we respond when some students already know the material? That's also an instructional question.

There are two HRS model questions:

1. How will we increase our instructional competence?
2. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?

District leadership is essential. But we have to think about leadership a bit differently. No longer can we think about leadership in terms of a person who's going to provide that for a school. We have to think about leadership in terms of what all of us can do collectively to help move a school forward. The HRS model is all



Cameron L. Rains, Ed.D.
Director of School Improvement
Solution Tree



A District Administration Webcast Digest • Originally presented on March 24, 2020

“To take a high reliability perspective in schools, we need to look at the research-based factors that have to be in place to ensure that students learn. We need to monitor students with lagging indicators, and when we see something that looks out of whack, we need to jump in and take care of it right away.”

about putting in place the conditions that are necessary to ensure that people are successful.

Higher reliability organizations are organizations that cannot fail. There would be a public backlash. The expectation is that they get it right every time. So they're constantly monitoring, scanning the horizon and looking for errors that could become more significant problems. When they find errors, they take immediate

corrective action and fix them before they become systemwide failures. And they recognize the interrelatedness of their operations systems.

To take a high reliability perspective in schools, we need to look at the research-based factors that have to be in place to ensure that students learn. We need to monitor students with lagging indicators, and when we see something that looks out of whack, we need to jump in and take care of it

right away. That's what it would mean to operate as an HRS.

There are many options in the HRS framework. One possibility is that school leaders can simply dig into the work, dig into the books, dig into webcasts like this, and work as a team within their school to go down the path of becoming highly reliable.

Another popular option is to partner with us. School leaders can do some work on their own, obviously, but they can also lean on experts, people who have experience implementing the model, people who have designed the model, and people who have seen different things play out across the world. The most intensive level is that a school leader could say: "We want external certification. We want an expert in the model to look at our evidence and make a certification decision." We work with schools on that as well.

To watch this webcast in its entirety, please visit **DAmag.me/ws032420**



Learning zones

How schools are designing ‘brain-friendly’ classroom spaces

By Ariana Fine

The concept of a “brain-friendly school” is one that supports different learning styles and abilities, promotes active involvement, incorporates multimedia, recognizes the impact of environmental factors such as noise and lighting, builds connections to the world outside the classroom, and encourages community accessibility and involvement. It’s the kind of environment teachers and students will appreciate all the more after returning to school after long coronavirus closure—and one that may more closely rival the potential choice of seating options students have gotten used to at home.

“Learning environments must be flexible to maximize students’ cognitive development. Teachers must be prepared to use time, space, furniture, materials, groupings, strategies and other classroom elements in multiple ways to address students’ multiple developmental trajectories,” write authors David A. Sousa and Carol Ann Tomlinson in *Differentiation and the Brain: How Neuroscience Supports the Learner-Friendly Classroom* (Solution Tree, 2018).

“We know from the learning science that when we give them space for visual learning, their learning goes beyond short-term

memory,” says Robert Dillon, director of innovative learning for the School District of University City in Missouri. If a teacher can introduce adaptable and adjustable spaces and furniture, students feel more empowered and comfortable in the classroom. The flexibility to move also enables students to add more seconds of movement to the day. This, in turn, promotes body and brain health.

When creating such spaces, experts suggest keeping the following best practices in mind.

Considering what the environment communicates

Increasing internal and external communication with parents and the community about design gets buy-in. Give district stakeholders, including teachers, talking points about why the school is implementing classroom changes.

Nonverbal messages also communicate a school’s priorities. When students, faculty and visitors are in the building’s offices, hallways or restrooms, what do they see? If it looks outdated, is cluttered or displays a poorly thought out design plan in regard to flow, sound, light and furnishings, it can send a mixed message

ROOM WITH A VIEW—Floor-to-ceiling windows at Eliot School in Boston allow the city’s natural and historic assets, from Boston Harbor and the Charlestown Navy Yard to the Bunker Hill Monument and the USS Constitution, to become part of the classroom design.

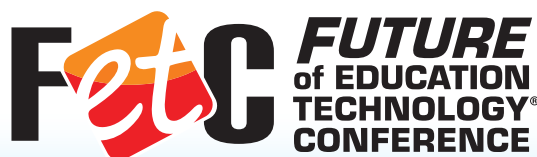


SHARE: [DAmag.me/zones](https://www.dmag.me/zones)

More coverage on facilities:
[DAmag.me/facilities](https://www.dmag.me/facilities)

BACK IN ORLANDO!

FIRST ED TECH EVENT IN 2021!



JANUARY 26 - 29, 2021
ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER
ORLANDO, FLA.

**Use your technology funds before
the fiscal year ends ...**

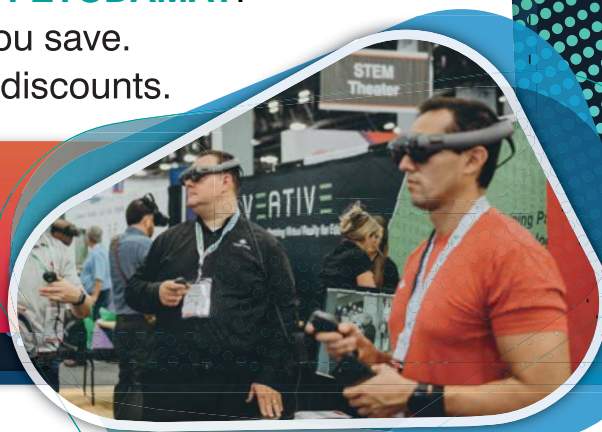


**REGISTRATION
IS OPEN!**

As a dedicated reader, we are giving you 10% off your conference pass with **Promo Code FETCDAMAY**.
The earlier you sign up, the more you save.
Plus, teams of 3+ get even deeper discounts.



**REGISTER at
www.FETC.org**



**STAY CONNECTED
WITH US ALL YEAR LONG**

#FETC



Learning zones

about the school's student focus.

"The spaces should become another asset for learning; in some districts, the shared and classroom spaces may be the only space of beauty that they are surrounded by in their daily lives," says Dillon. "We need to blend the art of space and learning sciences better; we have a responsibility to blend better."

Brain-friendly schools may have inspiring digital or print images of children learning on walls, he adds.

Understanding classroom design needs

Redesigning a space involves first understanding the current environment, says Joseph DiPuma, the district coordinator of innovation at Flagler Schools in Florida. He suggests filming a classroom over a period of time to record how teachers, students of varying ages and community members are using the space and what is working well or needs to be adapted. Could limitations with architecture be improved upon or compensated for with interior design?

Wall, floor and seating textures, plus lighting, smells in the room and types of flooring, matter. Like a symphony, if one instrument is off-key, you can feel the difference, DiPuma says. White or light-colored walls are optimal, but try to bring color in through classroom items, desk edging or other removable pieces.

Just remember: Incorporating beautiful furniture and technology does not equal engagement. Adaptable, dynamic spaces can evolve as well, to inspire creativity and add choice to engage learners.

Designing with history

The three-building Eliot School, a Boston Public Innovation School and the city's oldest continuously run school, has educated American figures such as Samuel Adams and Paul Revere. A \$15 million gut renovation to its 585 Commercial Street building involved designing to fit the views of Boston Harbor for the school's nearly 400 fifth through eighth grade students. The views help reset students' brains when they look

up and out to historical, light and natural inspirations outside the windows," says Rebecca Berry, president and sustainability director of Finegold Alexander Architects, the project's architect of record.

Within the existing building's restricted layout, the project team built adaptive use interior spaces. The design includes a digital art studio, a technology-focused classroom with a robotics lab and laser cutter, a media center and 18 simple classroom spaces that encourage collaborative learning.

"We are building a learning environment for tomorrow that gives voice and choice to the kids," says Executive Director Traci Walker Griffith. "We see physical space as the third teacher."

Classrooms are simple in design, and flexible. Features include calming muted interior colors, desks and tables that can be reconfigured easily, softer seating for sensory input options, and multiple white boards, says Berry. On upper learning floors, exterior design elements allow for interior learning nooks. Small group collaboration spaces between classrooms have built-in seating, plugs and whiteboards.

Students are encouraged to brainstorm on how the classroom should be adapted to their learning for that day's tasks. By actively participating in designing their space, and supporting creativity, curiosity and autonomy in their learning, it gives students competencies and literacies to be change agents, Walker Griffith explains.

One music teacher ran a mixed-grade podcasting production course. Some students brainstormed podcast ideas in the building nooks while others were in the music studio going through scripting, the idea design process and production.

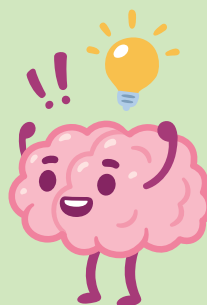
"This is all connected to the pedagogy of play," says Walker Griffith. "When you create with and for adults and kids, your engagement is higher. Engagement is organically co-created when both adults and students find meaningful ways to build relationships and feel connected with what they are doing together, such as co-planning the classroom or reconfiguring the common space." **DA**

Ariana Fine is DA's newsletter editor.

4 tips for creating brain-friendly classrooms

Eliot School's executive director, Traci Walker Griffith, recommends looking at the following parameters when designing a collaborative classroom space.

- 1. Creativity:** Where are the areas to write? Is there a place to paint or draw? Is there space for students to work individually, in small groups and with the entire class?
- 2. Accessibility:** Are whiteboards located throughout? Are there enough electrical outlets dispersed evenly throughout the classroom for flexibility in use of tech devices?
- 3. Seating:** Are traditional chairs and desks really needed for every student? Seating options can include adjustable seats and desks, beanbag chairs, ball chairs, rug seating, multilevel benches and more.
- 4. Research:** What research have you done on such spaces, including attending conferences and speaking with other schools? Find other educators that have gone through a similar classroom design process to determine what worked or didn't work and why.



ACADEMIC ESPORTS

CONFERENCE & EXPO

OCTOBER 19 - 21, 2020
—HILTON CHICAGO



The Academic Esports Conference & Expo™ is *the* place for K-12 leaders and their teams to find out more about this revolutionizing experience for students. With digital learning and online programs more prevalent than ever, it's time to get in on all the benefits that competitive gaming offers to students and schools.

WHAT MAKES ACADEMIC ESPORTS THE MUST-ATTEND EVENT IN 2020?

- ✓ **19** sessions specifically for the K-12 audience
- ✓ **30** sessions that are beneficial for both K-12 and higher education programs
- ✓ **8** sessions designed by program partner NASEF
- ✓ **16+** hours in the Expo Hall - with innovations from tech providers ready to support your established or new program
- ✓ **And so much more!**

We'll teach you how this digital opportunity can enhance your academic offerings!



REGISTER EARLY TO CLAIM THE BEST SAVINGS!

SAVE an extra \$50.00 with Promo Code AECEMAYMAG

www.AcademicEsportsConference.com

BRANDING SPONSOR



PROGRAM PARTNERS



STAY CONNECTED

#EdEsportsConf





How K-12 districts are feeding students through school closures

School Nutrition Association survey finds most districts engaged in emergency food assistance, but face variety of challenges

By Gay Anderson

As schools across the country face extended COVID-19 closures, nutrition professionals are racing the clock to ensure needy students don't go hungry. On a normal school day, nearly 22 million students nationwide receive free or reduced-price school meals.

As child nutrition director for Brandon Valley School District in South Dakota, I know how much families depend on these meals, particularly in times of economic crisis. School meal program leaders have faced a variety of challenges in our efforts to continue some form of service now for our at-risk students.

Emergency feeding-plan survey results

The School Nutrition Association surveyed school meal program directors about emergency feeding plans. Conducted March 12-16, the survey yielded responses from 1,769 districts representing 39,978 schools. Most districts (1,211) were engaged in or planning emergency meals or food assistance.

Plans varied, but most districts are offering grab-and-go meals at a limited number of schools, often for drive-thru pickup in the school bus loop or parking lot to maximize social distancing. Some allow students to receive two meals per day; others provide multiple days' worth

"I am concerned about supply chain limitations, staff availability, and how we can sustain service for our students and families."

at once. Many respondents cited additional plans to deliver to approved community sites or apartment complexes, or use school bus routes for meal drop-off.

Challenges and safety concerns

Many frequently cited regulatory impediments have been addressed since mid-March. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Congress have worked to provide waivers to various rules, including the mandate that students be present for parents to pick up meals.

However, many challenges have been further complicated over time. As schools require teachers and staff to shelter at home, how can we ensure the food service team stays safe? How can we maintain social distancing when families come to our feeding sites?

As Brandon Valley schools planned to serve our 4,400 students, these concerns were top of mind. We require no more than nine people working in our production kitchen at a time and keep all team members six feet apart as we assemble meals. This limits the number of meals we can prepare, yet the need continues to grow as families face food insecurity due to loss of work. We regu-

larly call for police support to manage traffic at our distribution sites and work to minimize contact in our drive-thru line. My colleagues in urban areas, where families often arrive on foot to collect their meals, face even greater challenges.

Service sustainability

Looking ahead, I am concerned about supply chain limitations, staff availability, and how we can sustain service for our students and families. Our families are so grateful for our support—for the food assistance and the sense of normalcy we provide. It's important that they know even though school is closed, they can still depend on school meals.

I'm increasingly concerned about the longer-term financial sustainability of school meal programs, which depend almost entirely on cafeteria sales and federal reimbursements for meals served.

My community is blessed that our superintendent has committed to continuing to pay school nutrition staff—including high-risk employees who need to stay home. Our program has lost about a third of its revenue at a time when milk and other food costs are rising. Nationwide, school meal programs that exhaust their food supplies and financial reserves will struggle to serve students when school is back in session. **DA**

Gay Anderson is the child nutrition director for Brandon Valley School District in South Dakota. She is also president of the School Nutrition Association, a national nonprofit representing more than 55,000 school nutrition professionals across the country.



SHARE:
DAmag.me/meals



**SUPERINTENDENTS
ACADEMY**
DAmag.me/supeacademy



ST Math®



Get **FREE ACCESS** to ST Math®

Meaningful Math Learning **FROM HOME.**

At MIND Research Institute, we are concerned about how health-related school closures may impact our nation's students.

As a mission-driven nonprofit organization, we stand ready to help.

Schools, districts, and parents can now get no-cost access to ST Math, our award-winning visual instructional program for grades K-8.

Learn more at stmath.com/coronavirus



//CODiE//
2019 SIIA CODiE WINNER

2019 WINNER IN 2 CATEGORIES

- Best Overall Education Technology
- Best Mathematics Instructional Solution for PreK-8



ST Math is created by
MIND Research Institute

mindresearch.org



GLOBAL **PD**

Sustain Professional Development Throughout the Year

Build collective teacher efficacy and reach higher levels of student achievement with the support of Global PD. Through our web-based learning platform, you and your team will receive targeted training from acclaimed experts.



SUBSCRIBE TODAY

SolutionTree.com/GlobalPDLibrary

800.733.6786



Solution Tree