



Horace Mann League of the USA

Founded in 1922 to Support Public Education

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An Honorary Association of Public Education Leaders

June 2, 2026

Greetings!

**Welcome
The HML Post,**

Research and Opinions About Leadership in Public Education

The HML Post is published every Tuesday to engage and inform the League's members of trends and issues facing public school leaders.

Some of the articles in this newsletter are condensed using ChaptGPT.

*If you change your email address, **please send a note** so you can continue receiving the Post.*

Editors

James Minichello, Executive Director

Jack McKay, Contributor

Thought of the Week

You are what you do. Not what you say, not what you believe, not how you vote, but what you spend your time on.

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Special Reports for League Members.

Click on the title to view (and download) the topic of interest.

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AASA Releases 2025-26 Superintendent Salary & Benefits Study



A significantly higher percentage of superintendents reported declining economic conditions this year (38%) compared to last year (30%), according to the 14th annual superintendent salary study released today by AASA, The School Superintendents Association. Higher percentages of superintendents in districts with enrollments of 1,000 or more students reported stable or growing economic conditions, whereas higher percentages of superintendents leading districts with fewer than 1,000 students reported declining economic conditions.

The report, **2025-26 AASA Superintendent Salary & Benefits Study**, is used to gauge school district leadership compensation and benefits, and is released in two versions - a full version for AASA members and an abridged version for wider/public circulation.

The 2025-26 survey received 1,951 responses from superintendents in 49 states, and the sample is generally representative of the larger population of superintendents. The annually revised and updated survey tracks the demographics, salary, benefits, and other elements of the employment agreements of school superintendents throughout the country.

“AASA has collected superintendent salary information annually since 2012 to provide critical insight into the conditions of the superintendency,” said David R. Schuler, AASA executive director. “Our continued commitment to this survey means we can capture not only real-time data, but also inform a broader narrative, allowing longitudinal analysis and comparisons on the progress school systems have made and the work that still remains.”

Additional demographics and key findings include:

- **Respondents reported having an average of 7.3 years of experience** as a superintendent. Contrary to the often-cited statistic of average tenure of a superintendent being less than 3 years, respondents reported an average time in the current position as 5.4 years.
- **Similar to findings over the last three years, almost 9/10 (88.88%) of respondents intend to remain** as superintendent in their current district for the upcoming 2026–2027 school year.

- **Pay ratios are more equitable in public education than in the corporate world.** The average ratio of superintendent salary to starting teacher salary was 3.53:1, compared to approximately 285:1 in the S&P 500 group of for-profit corporations.
- **Base salary correlated strongly with enrollment.** Salaries increased as district enrollment increased.
- **Female superintendents earned approximately 98% of what males earned in 2025–2026.**
- **Higher percentages of superintendents who identified as Black or African American (80.41%) held a doctorate** compared to those who identified as White (41%) and Hispanic or Latino (57.7%).
- **A noticeably higher percentage of females held a doctorate (50.63%)** compared to males (40.52%).

Schuler stated, “We are grateful for the excellent work of the research team and extend our appreciation to school superintendents across the nation who took time to reply to the survey and make this work possible.”

Click here to access a copy of the 2025-2026 AASA Superintendent Salary & Benefits Study. For specific questions about the report or long-term trends, contact Tara Thomas, AASA Government Affairs Manager, at tthomas@aasa.org.

12.6M Kids Lack Access to Summer Programming

By Kara Arundel on the K-12 Dive site.

The demand for summer learning and enrichment programs is strong, but millions of children remain excluded due to cost, transportation, and limited availability—highlighting a growing challenge for schools and local leaders in equity and community support.



1. **Millions of children are unable to access summer programs.** An Afterschool Alliance report found that approximately 12.6 million children whose families want summer programming are unable to participate due to major access barriers.
2. **Cost is the largest obstacle.** Many families report that summer camps, enrichment programs, and childcare opportunities are simply too expensive, particularly for middle- and lower-income households.
3. **Transportation limits participation.** Even when programs exist, many families struggle with: (a) Lack of transportation, (b) Inconvenient locations, and (c) Work schedules that make drop-off and pickup difficult

4. **Program availability is insufficient.** Demand for summer opportunities exceeds supply in many communities, especially in: (a) Rural areas, (b) Lower-income neighborhoods, (c) Smaller communities
5. **Families strongly value summer learning opportunities.** Parents are seeking programs that provide: (a) Academic enrichment, (b) Safe supervision, (c) Physical activity, (d) Social development. Interest in quality summer programs remains high.
6. **Summer learning loss remains a concern.** Lack of access can contribute to: (a) Academic regression, (b) Reduced social engagement, (c) Wider achievement gaps, and (d) especially for vulnerable student populations.

The report calls for expanded investment and partnerships. The article suggests schools, community organizations, nonprofits, and local governments need to collaborate to: (a) Increase access, (b) reduce costs, (c) expand transportation options, and (d) create more equitable summer opportunities

Implications

- Consider partnerships with:
 - Parks departments
 - Libraries
 - YMCA programs
 - Community colleges
 - Nonprofits
- Explore:
 - Grant opportunities
 - Transportation support
 - Shared facilities use
- Frame summer programs as:
 - Academic support
 - Community development
 - Childcare support for working families

AI and Education: Strengthening Freedom of Thought in the Battle for Truth

The future of democracy may depend less on access to information and more on citizens' ability to evaluate information.



As AI-generated content becomes commonplace, schools must place renewed emphasis on media literacy, critical thinking, evaluation of evidence, and intellectual independence. Technology can support truth-seeking, but it cannot replace informed human judgment.

1. **Artificial intelligence can both combat and amplify misinformation**, making it a double-edged technology.
2. **AI tools can assist with fact-checking**, source verification, and identifying disinformation campaigns.
3. **Deepfakes and synthetic media** make it increasingly difficult for citizens to distinguish truth from manipulation.
4. **Digital literacy and critical thinking** remain the strongest defenses against misinformation.
5. **Education systems must teach students** how algorithms influence information consumption.
6. **Human judgment remains essential** even when AI tools provide information and analysis.
7. **Schools have a growing responsibility to prepare students** to be informed participants in democratic societies.

Democracy, Civil Society, and the Future of Public Institutions by the Associated Press.

Public schools are among America's most important democratic institutions. They bring together students from diverse backgrounds, teach civic values, and prepare future citizens. Discussions about strengthening democracy should include serious attention to strengthening public education and civic learning.



1. Major philanthropic organizations are increasing investments in democratic institutions.
2. Concerns about civic polarization and democratic erosion continue to grow.
3. Efforts focus on civil rights, civic participation, transparency, and public accountability.
4. Healthy democracies depend on strong civic organizations and informed citizens.
5. Public institutions remain critical pillars of a democratic society.
6. Civic engagement requires participation across ideological and demographic lines.
7. Long-term democratic health depends upon public trust and active citizenship.

A Common Theme Connects the Above Three Articles

The future of democracy, education, and leadership will depend less on technology itself and more on the quality of human judgment.

Artificial intelligence is changing how people access information. Political polarization is testing democratic institutions. Educational leaders face unprecedented challenges in preparing students for a rapidly changing world.

The response cannot simply be more technology. Schools must continue to cultivate the uniquely human qualities that machines cannot replace: curiosity, ethical reasoning, critical thinking, empathy, civic responsibility, and wisdom.

For public education leaders, the challenge of the next decade is clear:

Prepare students not only to work in an AI-powered world, but also to lead, participate, and flourish in a democratic society.

Leading Through Low Morale Navigating adaptive challenges at work.

By Psychology Today

When morale is low, the most effective leaders pause, listen, and engage their teams in addressing the underlying challenges. Sustainable improvement comes from understanding the problem before attempting to solve it.



This strikes me as particularly relevant for superintendents and education leaders because it emphasizes listening, trust-building, and adaptive leadership rather than top-down management.

1. **Low morale is often an adaptive challenge, not a quick fix.** When morale declines, the underlying causes are often complex and cannot be solved through a single policy change or initiative.
2. **Resist the urge to react immediately.** Effective leaders avoid rushing to solutions and instead take time to assess the situation thoughtfully before acting.
3. **Step back to gain perspective.** The article encourages leaders to move from the “dance floor” to the “balcony”—observing the broader organizational dynamics that may be contributing to low morale.
4. **Look for root causes, not symptoms.** Issues such as layoffs, uncertainty, or organizational change can undermine morale in ways that superficial fixes cannot address.
5. **Create psychological safety.** Employees are more likely to share honest feedback when they feel safe expressing concerns without fear of repercussions.
6. **Engage those closest to the problem.** The people experiencing challenges every day often have the clearest understanding of what is and is not working. Their voices should be part of the solution.

7. **Leadership is about facilitating, not fixing.** Rather than imposing answers, effective leaders create the conditions for collaboration, listening, and collective problem-solving.

What Low Morale Means for School Leaders

Low morale is not unique to the corporate world. School leaders today face many of the same adaptive challenges, including staff burnout, workforce shortages, budget pressures, and ongoing change initiatives.



When morale declines, the instinct may be to respond with quick fixes or new programs. However, as the Psychology Today article suggests, lasting improvement often begins with listening. Superintendents and principals can strengthen morale by creating opportunities for honest dialogue, seeking to understand underlying concerns, and involving educators in developing solutions.

By fostering trust, transparency, and shared ownership, school leaders can help build resilient learning communities where educators feel valued, supported, and empowered to do their best work.

The Developmental Significance of Friendships from a Neuroscience Perspective

Friendships are a cornerstone of human development and well-being, influencing mental health, longevity, and social functioning across the lifespan.



Research underscores that friendships are not just social niceties but essential to mental, emotional, and physical health, and that intentional cultivation is vital in a modern, often isolating society.

1. **Developmental and Psychological Benefits:** From adolescence onward, supportive and high-quality friendships are linked to greater well-being, lower rates of depression and anxiety, reduced delinquent behavior, and higher academic achievement. They also protect against the negative effects of peer victimization and internalizing problems.
2. **Neuro-imaging studies show that friendships activate brain** regions involved in reward (ventral striatum, ventromedial prefrontal cortex) and

mentalizing (medial prefrontal cortex, temporoparietal regions), suggesting deep emotional and cognitive engagement.

3. **Health and Longevity:** Psychological research consistently finds that stable, high-quality friendships are strong predictors of long-term well-being and longevity. People with close friends are less likely to die from all causes, including heart disease and chronic illnesses, while social isolation increases the risk of premature death.
4. **Friendship Quality and Structure:** The American Friendship Project (2024) found that while most Americans report having friends, many feel they are not as close to them as they would like. Over 40% of respondents expressed a desire for greater closeness, despite high satisfaction with the number of friends. Structural factors—such as the frequency of face-to-face meetings, communication methods, and perceived closeness—are key to the health of friendships.
5. **The “Friendship Recession”.** Data from the American Perspectives Survey shows a sharp decline in the proportion of Americans with many close friends, with a rise in those with no close friends since 1990. This shift is linked to suburban sprawl, reduced communal spaces, economic pressures, and cultural changes that prioritize work over social connection.
6. **Models of Friendship:** Traditional social exchange theory views friendships as transactions where benefits and costs are balanced. However, newer research proposes a “risk-pooling” model, where friendships are maintained not because of a running tally of favors, but because they provide companionship, mutual support, and shared resilience in facing life’s challenges.

Key Takeaways for Practice and Policy

- Encourage intentional time for friends and create opportunities for meaningful interaction.
- Support community spaces and social infrastructure to foster organic connections.
- Recognize that friendship quality—closeness, trust, and mutual support—is as important as quantity.
- Integrate friendship health into public health and education initiatives to counteract the “friendship recession.”

Questions Everyone at the Education World Forum Should Be Asking About AI: Seven Key Takeaways

The article urges education leaders to move beyond the hype surrounding artificial intelligence and focus on thoughtful, evidence-based questions. The goal is not simply to adopt AI, but to ensure it advances teaching, learning, and equity in ways that serve students and communities.



AI should be viewed as a tool to support educational goals—not as the goal itself. That message aligns well with the League’s long-standing emphasis on equity, opportunity, and preparing students for democratic participation.

1. **How can AI help close—not widen—the learning divide?** Education leaders should evaluate whether AI tools expand opportunities for all learners or primarily benefit those who already have advantages.
2. **What problem are we trying to solve?** Rather than adopting AI because it is new or popular, schools should begin with clearly defined educational challenges and determine whether AI is the appropriate solution.
3. **Who benefits from AI implementation?** Policymakers and educators should consider whether AI serves students, teachers, and communities—or primarily the interests of technology vendors.
4. **How do we ensure AI aligns with local needs and values?** Effective AI adoption requires solutions that reflect local contexts, curricula, cultures, and educational priorities rather than one-size-fits-all approaches.
5. **What skills will students need in an AI-driven world?** The article encourages leaders to rethink traditional assumptions about schooling and prepare students for a future where AI is a routine part of work and daily life.
6. **How can governments, educators, and industry work together.** Sustainable AI adoption depends on strong partnerships among schools, policymakers, researchers, and technology providers.
7. **What safeguards are needed to ensure responsible use?** Questions of privacy, ethics, transparency, and accountability should be addressed before AI tools are widely implemented in education systems.

Spotlight Conversations: Tobin Novasio

by James Mininchello

Spotlight Conversations is a Q&A series produced by the Horace Mann League that highlights leaders shaping today’s public education landscape—individuals whose work reflects the League’s mission: that the public school system of the United States is an indispensable force in sustaining our democracy and a dynamic influence in American life.

It’s a pleasure to speak with Tobin Novasio, superintendent of Montana’s [Hardin Public Schools](#), a learning community serving more than 1,800 students. Novasio is also a member of HML’s Board of Directors.



HML: Hardin Public Schools is located in a uniquely rural part of Montana—what makes your district and community especially distinctive?

TN: We’re about 45 miles southeast of Billings, the largest city in Montana. Big Horn County, where we’re located, is roughly the size of Delaware, and our

district covers about two-thirds of that area. Many of our students spend a significant amount of time on buses.

About 90% of our students are Native American, primarily from the Crow and Northern Cheyenne tribes, so we're bringing together two distinct cultures. There's a deep cultural significance in our community, and building strong relationships with families is essential. Each tribe has its own traditions and identity, so it's been a learning experience for me—but also one of the most rewarding parts of my role.

Our local economy is largely rooted in farming and ranching, so programs like FFA and vocational agriculture play an important role in our schools.

HML: What are some of the key opportunities and challenges that come with leading a rural school district today?

TN: One of the greatest opportunities is the ability to build meaningful relationships. In a smaller district, you're more connected—to students, staff, and the broader community—than you might be in a larger system. There's also a level of agility. We can move more quickly when change is needed.

For example, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we partnered with BetterLesson to provide teachers with distance-learning training. We were able to implement those changes more quickly than some larger districts.

The biggest challenge is the teacher shortage. Many of our educators come from overseas and can stay only five years, so turnover is common and long-term continuity is difficult. Teacher pay is also a factor—some educators gain experience here and then move to larger districts that offer higher salaries. Ultimately, that affects the entire leadership pipeline, from teachers to principals to superintendents.

HML: What can be done to bring more qualified teachers to your district?

TN: We're working to create stronger pathways into rural education. At the same time, the personal touch matters more than ever—reaching out directly, building relationships, and encouraging individuals to consider opportunities in communities like ours.

HML: Can you tell us about Big Horn Academy—its purpose, and the impact it's having on students?

TN: Big Horn Academy is one of the initiatives I'm most proud of. When I arrived, our graduation rate was below 60%, among the lowest in the state. We've since built a learning environment grounded in trauma-informed practices and strong relationships, with a focus on meeting students where they are. In Montana, the standard is one counselor for every 400 high school students. Our goal is one for every 40. That level of support makes a real difference.

I often say this work is about people, not programs. When I coached football, we used to say it's about the "Johnnies and Joes," not the X's and O's—and that applies here, too.

The Academy also offers evening classes, allowing students who work during the day to attend from 6 to 9 p.m. We're fortunate to have a strong leadership team, including a dedicated principal and a Native American counselor who builds exceptional relationships with students.

HML: You are a member of AASA, The School Superintendents Association's Leadership for Well-Being and Learning Cohort. **How has that experience influenced your leadership and supported your school community?**

TN: This has been a passion of mine throughout my career. As a nation, we recognize the importance of meeting students' physical needs—food, shelter, clothing—yet we also need to ensure we're supporting their mental well-being. If those needs aren't met, academic success becomes much more difficult. Through the cohort, I've connected with valuable resources and colleagues across the country. One example is our partnership with the Cook Center, which has enabled us to offer parent guidance and coaching. These resources have been incredibly valuable for the families we serve.

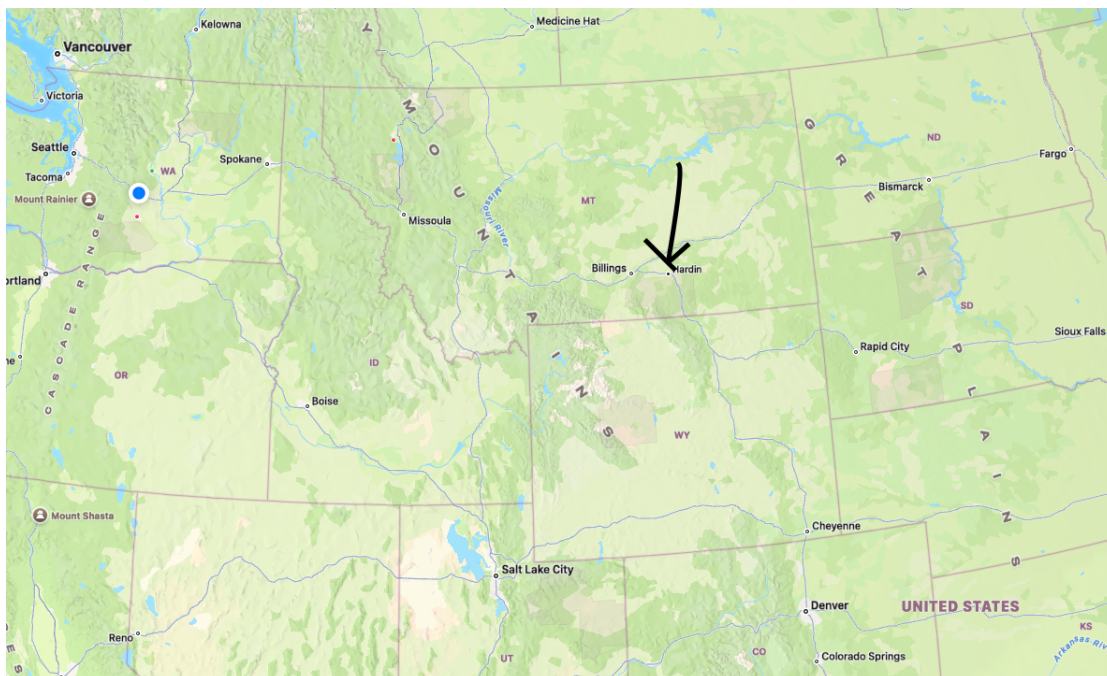
HML: As a member of the Horace Mann League Board, what does that role mean to you, and how does it connect to your work in Hardin?

TN: It's a true honor to be part of the Horace Mann League and to support its focus on the foundational purpose of public education. A strong public school system is a public good—just as essential as safe roads and infrastructure.

I'm a product of public education. I'm a first-generation college student, and at 17, I never imagined I would step onto a college campus. The teachers and mentors in my life made that possible, and their influence helped me break the cycle of generational poverty for my family.

That's why I'm so committed to ensuring we don't move toward a multi-tiered education system. Every child—regardless of background, income, race, or ability—deserves access to a high-quality public education. Supporting that mission is deeply personal to me, and it's why I'm proud to serve as part of the League.

HML: Tobin, thank you for sharing your insights and for your leadership. We also appreciate your ongoing contributions to the Horace Mann League.



School Choice Is Creating Two Separate School Systems (Plus, Plans for a National Voucher Program)

on the Education Week site.



1. **School choice expansion is accelerating across the country.** Many states have expanded: (a) Vouchers, (b) Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), (c) Tax-credit scholarship programs. These policies allow public funds to follow students to private and, in some cases, religious schools.
2. **The emergence of two parallel education systems.** The growth of school choice is creating: (a) A publicly governed school system open to all students, (b) A separate network of private schools receiving public support but operating under different rules, and (c) raises questions about equity, accountability, and access.
3. **Accountability standards often differ:** Traditional public schools must comply with: (a) State testing requirements, (b) Open enrollment obligations, (c) Public records and transparency laws. Many voucher-supported private schools face fewer requirements.
4. **Student access and admissions practices vary:** (a) Public schools are generally required to serve all students. (b) Private schools may retain discretion over Admissions, Religious expectations, and Student conduct standards. Critics argue this creates unequal access to publicly funded educational opportunities.
5. **Supporters view choice as parental empowerment:** Advocates contend that parents should be able to select schools that best fit their children's: (a) Academic needs, (b) Values, and (c) Learning styles. They argue that competition encourages improvement throughout the education system.
6. **Growing discussion of a national voucher initiative:** Proposals that would expand school choice beyond state-level efforts, potentially creating a nationwide mechanism for directing public funds toward private educational options.

7. **The debate reflects competing visions of education.** At its core, the issue centers on differing beliefs about whether education is primarily: A public institution designed to strengthen democracy and community, and (b) A family-centered service where public funding should support individual choice. This philosophical divide is likely to shape education policy for years to come.

Implications

- Expect continued competition for student enrollment.
- Strengthen communication about the value and outcomes of public schools.
- Highlight programs, student success, and community partnerships.
- Focus on family engagement and customer service.
- Prepare for policy discussions regarding funding, accountability, and public oversight.

The expansion of school choice is reshaping American education by creating parallel systems of schooling with different governance, accountability, and admissions structures. The central policy question is whether public funds should primarily support a common public school system or follow families to a wider range of educational options.

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Leadership Issues

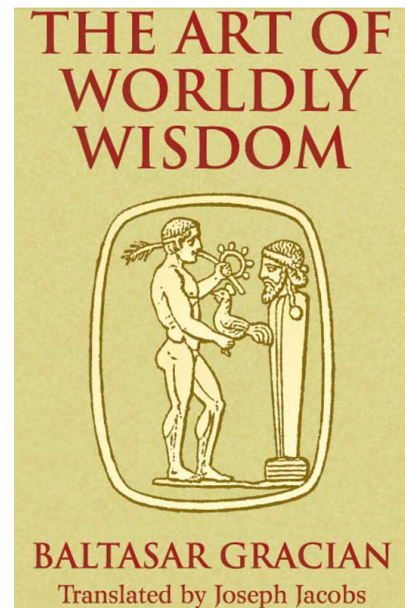
Great Advice When With Others

1. Never shake hands while sitting.
2. Never speak ill of the food when you are a guest.
3. Don't eat the last piece of something you didn't buy
4. Protect those behind you and respect those beside you.
5. Never make the first offer in a negotiation.
6. Don't take credit for the work you didn't do.
7. Dress well, no matter what the occasion.
8. Speak honestly — say what you think and mean what you say.
9. Ask more than you answer.
10. Leave the profane language for the less educated.
11. Avoid placing your phone on the table when eating with someone.
12. Listen, smile, and most of all make eye contact.
13. If you're not invited, don't ask to go.
14. Never be ashamed of where you come from.
15. Don't beg for a relationship.



Avoid the Faults of Your Nation from The Art of Worldly Wisdom:

1. **Every team develops characteristic strengths and weaknesses:** That cultures often cultivate common habits, virtues, and faults that influence how people think and behave.
2. **Wise individuals rise above inherited prejudices:** A person's birthplace should not determine their character. The truly wise person examines cultural assumptions rather than accepting them automatically.
3. **National stereotypes contain cautionary lessons:** While generalizations are imperfect, Gracián suggests that societies often have recurring tendencies that individuals should recognize and guard against.
4. **Self-awareness is essential:** People should honestly assess whether they have adopted unhelpful habits simply because they are common in their environment. Awareness is the first step toward improvement.
5. **Character requires independent judgment:** Wise individuals think for themselves rather than following popular opinion or cultural fashion. They evaluate ideas based on merit rather than tradition alone.
6. **Personal excellence transcends group identity:** True distinction comes from cultivating virtues such as: (a) Prudence, (b) Moderation, (c) Integrity, and (d) Sound judgment. These qualities elevate a person above the limitations of their surroundings.
7. **The goal is continual self-improvement:** Rather than criticizing others, Gracián encourages individuals to identify and overcome their own weaknesses. Personal growth begins when we recognize our blind spots and work deliberately to correct them.



Leadership

For leaders, this maxim suggests:

- Question organizational habits that are accepted simply because "we've always done it this way."
- Avoid groupthink and institutional blind spots.
- Seek diverse perspectives before making decisions.
- Evaluate ideas on evidence and merit rather than tradition or popularity.
- Encourage a culture of continuous learning and self-reflection.

Key Insight

The wise person is not limited by the assumptions of their culture, organization, or generation. They possess the self-awareness and discipline to recognize inherited weaknesses and the courage to rise above them.

Wisdom requires independent judgment and self-awareness. We should appreciate the strengths of our culture and community while consciously avoiding the faults that can become accepted simply because they are common.

Belief and Mindset from The New Science of Momentum by Don Yaeger and Bernie Banks:

1. **Belief is the fuel that ignites momentum:** Momentum begins when individuals and teams genuinely believe that success is possible. Before performance improves, people must first develop confidence in their ability to succeed.
2. **Mindset shapes behavior and results:** What people believe about themselves and their circumstances influences how they act. Positive expectations often lead to greater effort, persistence, and resilience.
3. **Leaders are belief-builders:** Effective leaders cultivate confidence by communicating possibilities, reinforcing strengths, and helping people see a path forward. They create an environment where people believe improvement is achievable.
4. **Small wins strengthen confidence:** Success builds upon success. Early victories provide evidence that progress is occurring, reinforcing belief and encouraging greater commitment.
5. **Negative thinking can stall momentum:** Fear, cynicism, and self-doubt can undermine performance even when talent and resources are present. Leaders must address limiting beliefs before they become embedded in the culture.
6. **Growth mindset encourages continuous improvement:** Teams that view challenges as opportunities to learn are more likely to persist through setbacks. Mistakes become sources of learning rather than proof of inadequacy.
7. **Shared belief creates collective momentum:** When an entire team embraces a common vision and confidence in success, energy becomes contagious. Collective belief often produces performance beyond what individuals could achieve alone.
8. **Mindset must be reinforced consistently.** Belief is not a one-time event. Leaders sustain momentum by continually reinforcing purpose, celebrating progress, and helping people maintain confidence during difficult periods.



Leadership

1. Create a district narrative focused on possibility rather than deficiency.
2. Celebrate small wins in attendance, literacy, graduation rates, or school culture.
3. Help staff view challenges as opportunities for improvement rather than evidence of failure.
4. Use data to demonstrate progress, not merely identify problems.
5. Build collective confidence that the district can improve despite obstacles.

6. Model optimism while honestly confronting challenges (the Stockdale Paradox).
7. Recognize and publicize examples of success across schools.

Momentum begins in the mind. People move toward the future they believe is possible. The leader's job is not merely to manage performance, but to cultivate the belief that meaningful progress can and will occur.

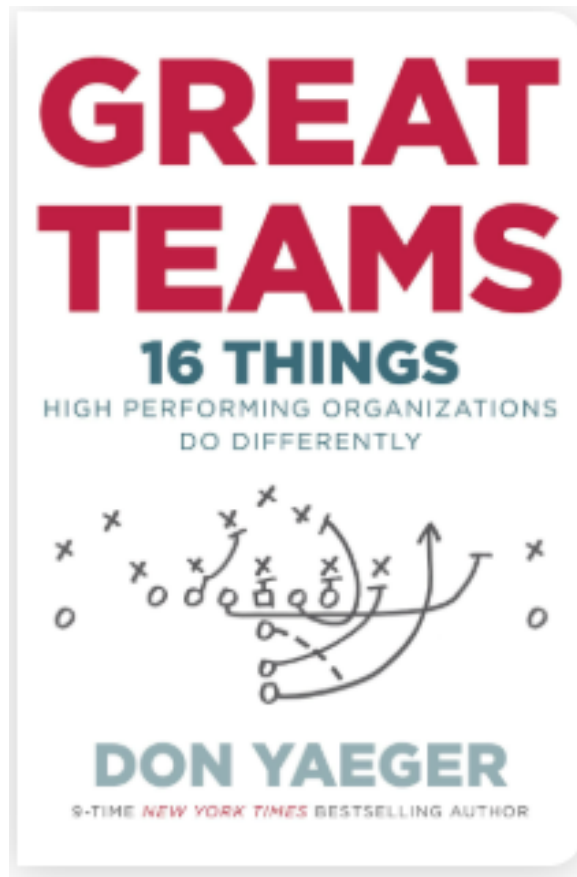
Belief creates action, action creates results, and results reinforce belief. The most successful leaders understand that sustaining momentum requires continuously strengthening the mindset and confidence of the people they lead.

Effective Leadership from Great Teams by Don Yaeger.

Great leadership is not about controlling people; it is about creating the conditions in which talented people can work together effectively and consistently perform at a high level.

Effective Leadership

1. **Great teams require intentional leadership:** Success is not accidental. Effective managers establish clear expectations, provide direction, and create an environment where people can perform at their best.
2. **Recruit for character and cultural fit:** High-performing organizations look beyond technical skills and seek individuals whose values, attitudes, and work ethic align with the team's culture.
3. **Develop leaders at every level:** Great teams create leadership opportunities throughout the organization rather than relying on a single strong leader. Leadership is viewed as a shared responsibility.
4. **Build depth and succession:** Effective managers prepare others to step into larger roles when needed. Strong organizations are not dependent on one or two key individuals.
5. **Provide a clear roadmap.** Team members perform better when they understand: (a) the mission, and (b) the goals. Their individual role in achieving success



6. **Promote accountability and ownership.** Great leaders create a culture where individuals take responsibility for their performance and for the success of the entire team.
7. **Strengthen relationships and trust.** Effective leadership recognizes that strong personal connections improve communication, collaboration, and commitment to shared goals.
8. **Balance high expectations with support.** The best leaders challenge people to excel while providing coaching, encouragement, and the resources necessary to succeed.

Implications

- Hire employees who fit the district's mission and values.
- Develop future principals, teacher leaders, and department heads.
- Create succession plans for key positions.
- Clearly communicate district priorities and expectations.
- Foster collaboration rather than isolated work.
- Hold people accountable while providing meaningful support.
- Invest in relationship-building across schools and departments.
- Celebrate growth and recognize contributions.

Effective management transforms a collection of capable individuals into a cohesive, high-performing team by providing clarity, accountability, leadership development, trust, and a shared sense of purpose.

ChatGPT and AI

Horace Mann League Spotlight Conversations



Tobin Novasio, Superintendent of Montana's [Hardin Public Schools](#), a learning community serving more than 1,800 students.

Tobin shares a reflection on leading a rural school district and the challenges it brings.



The Horace Mann League's Video Archives

[HML Gallery 1996-2023](#)

[2023 Annual Meeting Video -Presidents and Boards](#)

[HML Board Meeting and Annual Meeting 2015](#)

[The Iceberg Effect - Student Achievement](#)

Podcasts by Education Leaders

The Horace Mann League's Podcast Series. (Click on the [blue](#) title to listen.)

[Glenn Robbins: Nationally recognized leader in education technology.](#)

Glenn was recently honored with the 2026 School Leader of the Year Award from EdTech Digest. During the conversation, he reflects on what the recognition means to him, his district, and the Brigantine community.



[A Tribute to David Berliner by Dr. Gene Sharratt.](#)

We honor the life and legacy of Dr. David Berliner, one of the most influential education researchers of our time and a steadfast advocate for public education and democracy.

[Growing Partnerships that Strengthen Learning Communities](#) by David Law, President of AASA and Superintendent of the Minnetonka Public Schools.

[Rural Schools are the Backbone of Many Communities](#) by Dr. Melissa Sadorf, Executive Director of the National Rural Education Association.

On Fire, Under Fire, or Fired: Reclaiming Passion, Purpose, & Progress in Troubling Times by Dr. Kristi Wilson and Dr. Susan Enfield.

Schools Reimagined with Dr. Jacqueline Grennon Brooks. Unifying the Science of Learning.

Path to Leadership by Dr. Martha Bruckner
Suggestions for women educators striving to advance their careers in education administration.

Artificial Intelligence in School Settings by Dr. Ray McNulty

Equity Paradoxes Created by Educational Policies
Dr. Alfredo J. Artiles:

Diversity in America: Teaching Students to Know, to Care, & to Act in Global Times
by Dr. James Banks

Women in Leadership by Andi Fournalis
Andi Fournalis describes her career journey and shares suggestions for women seeking to grow their public education careers.

The Journey with Dr. Jack McKay. An opportunity to meet some great public educators.

Artificial Intelligence, the Landscape of Public Schools by Joshua Starr

Artificial Intelligence and the impact it has on public education today by Ben Williamson

Equity and Leadership with Gary Orfield and Patricia Gande

The Future of Public Education with Gloria Ladson Billings, professor at the University of Wisconsin. (Annual Meeting Presentation)

Democracy and Education: The Crisis of our Times with David Berliner and Joel Westheimer

The Future of Public Education with Valerie Strauss, education journalist for the Washington Post. (Annual Meeting Presentation)

Why Public Education is the Best Safety Net for Democracy with James Harvey and Jimmy Minnichello.

Recent Supreme Court Decision and the Implications for Public Schools with Derek Black and Jessica Levin.

Equity and Equality in the Public Schools with Linda Darling Hammond and Joshua Starr.

The U.S. Dept. of Education and the Local Public School with Secretary Miguel Cardona and Julie Underwood.

Critical Race Theory and School Board Meetings

with Bryan Brayboy, Adrienne Dixson, and Daniel G. Solorzano.

The Implications of Charters and Privatization of Public Education with Carol Burris and Kevin Welner

Challenges and Opportunities of Leading with Jeanne Collins, Doug Burge, and Laurie Barron.

Leading a School District During a Pandemic with Jim Sutfin, Luvelle Brown, and Andi Fourlis.

Thoughts on the State of Public Education by David Berliner and Diane Ravitch.

Notable Books and Reports for Members

Click on the title to download.

Long-Range Planning - (Strategic Plans: Benefits and Consequences)

Good to Great: The Guide to the Superintendent's Success by Jack McKay

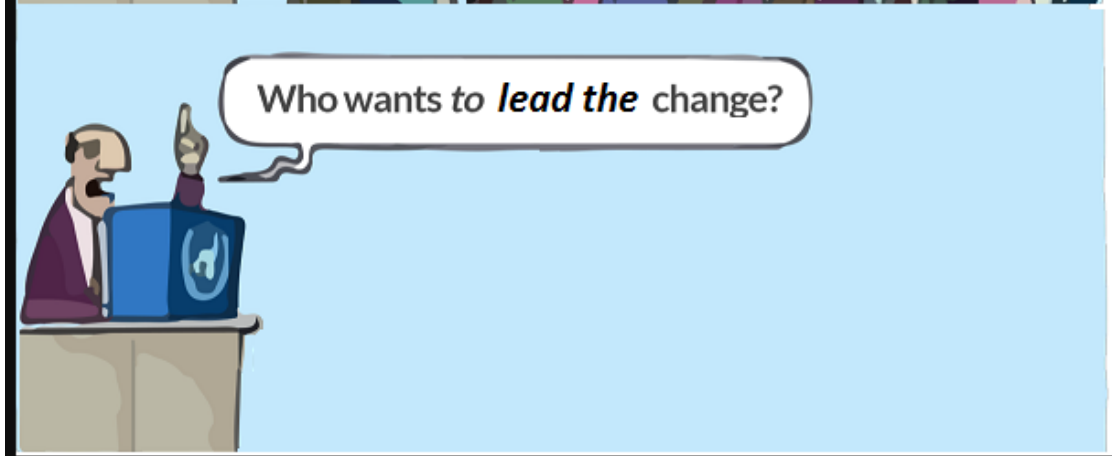


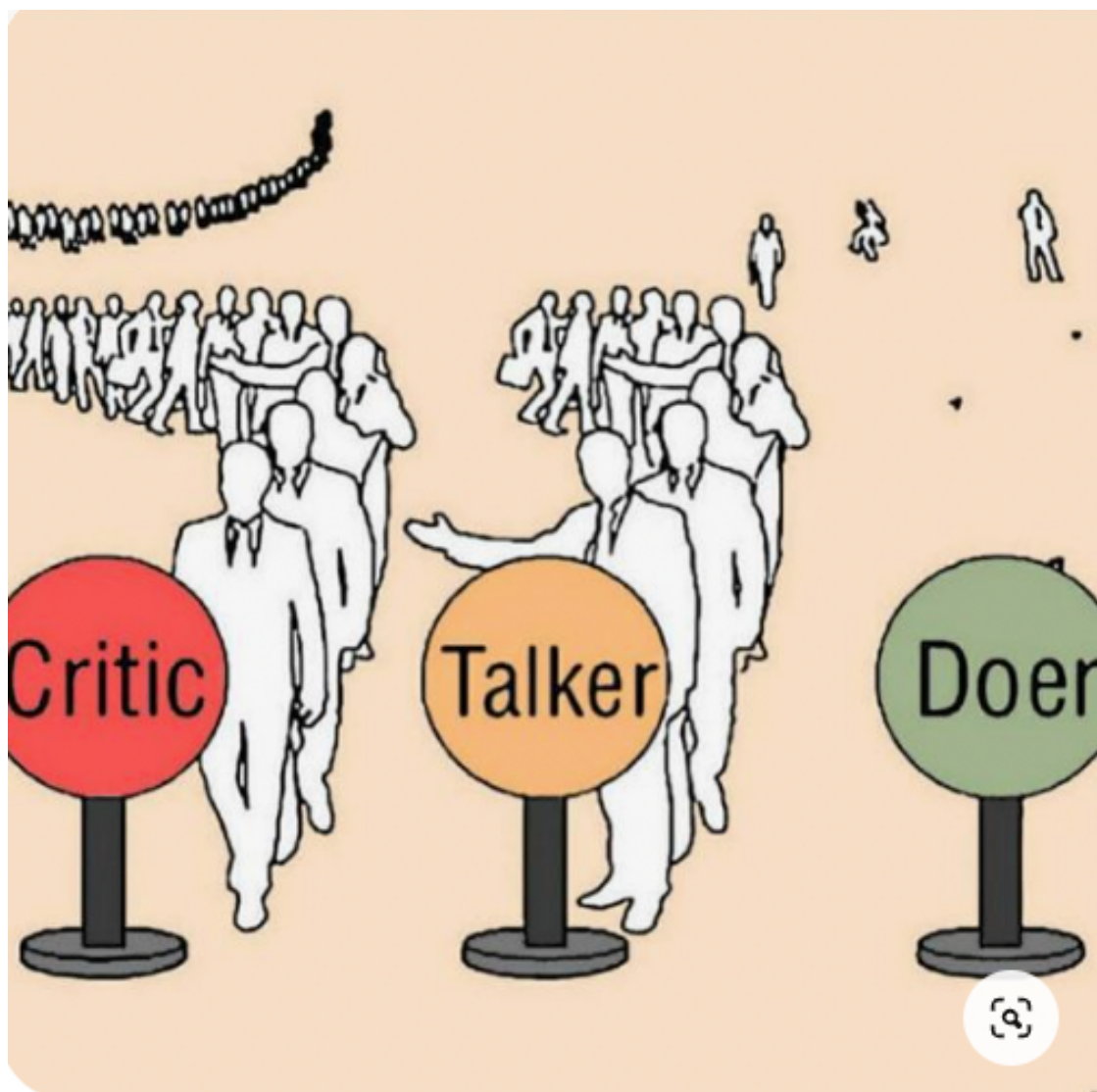
The Guide for Using AI - ChatGPT (Getting Started)

The Book of Wisdom (Good coffee - Great Friendships)

Cartoon for the Week







Fill in the blank!

If my students only remember one thing from my class, I hope it's



1. Better Interview Questions and Possible Responses
 2. Suggestions Guidelines for Better Presentations
 3. Opening the Schoolhouse Door for Patrons
 4. Signals in the Life of the Superintendent
 5. Best Leadership Quotes of All
 6. Horace Mann: An Exemplar of Reform
 7. The Blueberry Story
 8. What Teachers Make. . .
 9. **Examples of "Letters to the Editor"** (updated)
-

Website

About Us



Address:

HML

James Minichello, Exec. Dir.
400 Cameron Station #121
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Purpose

The Horace Mann League, founded in 1922, perpetuates the ideals of Horace Mann, the founder of the American public school system. Its basic purpose and activities are to strengthen our public schools.

The League's members believe that the public school system of the United States is an indispensable agency for strengthening the ideals of our democracy and the most necessary unifying and dynamic influence in American life. Accordingly, our public schools should be free, classless, non-sectarian, and open to all children of

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all the people. The school system should be dominated by such purposes that will insure the preparation of children and youth for effective citizenship in our democracy.

The League believes that the American tradition of separation of church and state must be preserved and should be most vigorously and zealously safeguarded.

The League grants the right to special interest groups, including various religious sects, to maintain their own schools so long as such schools meet the standards defined by the states in which they are located.

The League believes that these separate or non-public schools should be financed entirely by their supporters. It is therefore unalterably opposed to proposals to devote public funds to the direct or indirect support of private schools.

The League favors the generous financial support of the public schools by local, state, and federal funds. It believes, however, that those federal grants should be so made that there will be no federal control or interference in local schools' administration, curriculum, personnel, or instructional procedures.

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