



Horace Mann League of the USA

Founded in 1922 to Support Public Education

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**An Honorary Association of
Public Education Leaders**

September 1, 2026

Greetings!

**Welcome
The HML Post,**

**News, Insights, and Perspectives
Shaping 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.

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

Editor
James Minichello, Executive Director, The Horace Mann League

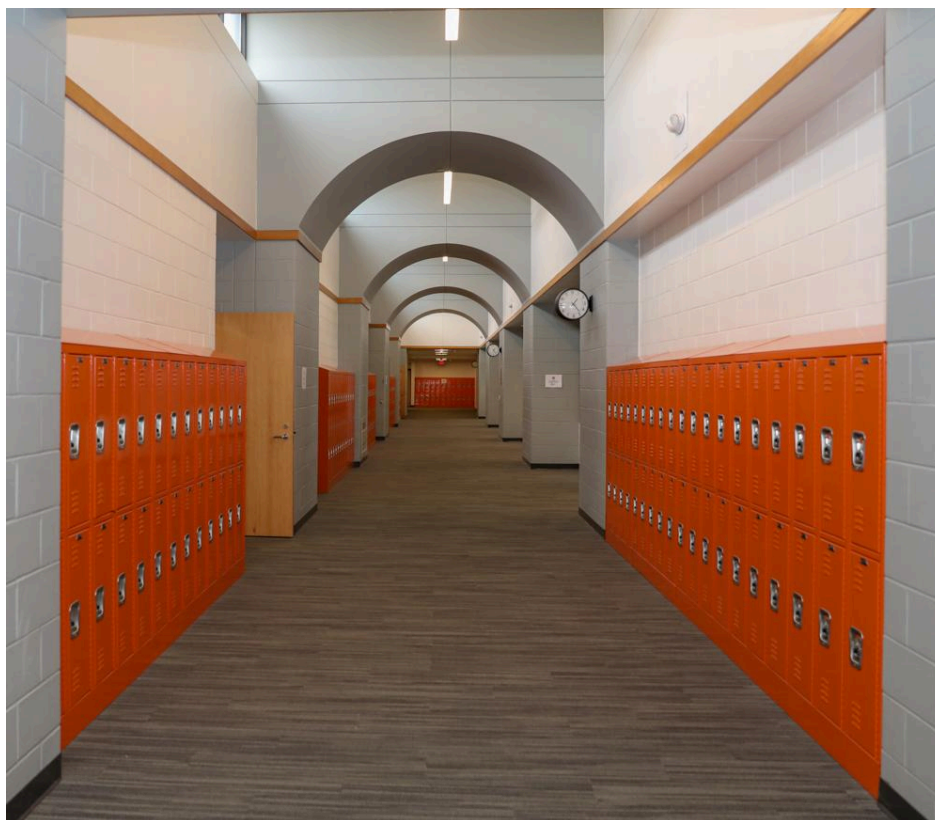
Thought of the Week



“Quality leadership begins with listening, especially to the students, educators, families, and community members most affected by our decisions. It turns shared purpose into meaningful action by building trust, developing others, and helping people see themselves as authors of a better future.”

— Michael Lubelfeld, Retired Supt.; Vice Pres., ECRA Group; Sr. Ed. Advisor, Wight & Co.; ISTE Faculty

HML News



Editor's Note: It Takes a Community

Across the country, another school year is now underway. Classrooms are filled, buses are rolling, cafeterias are bustling, and hallways once again echo with the energy of students and educators as they begin another year together.

Behind every successful school day is an extraordinary community of people working together on behalf of students. We salute the superintendents and administrative teams supporting their districts; the principals and assistant principals leading their school communities; the teachers inspiring learning and discovery; and the counselors, support professionals, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, hall monitors, and countless others whose work helps make our schools welcoming, safe, and successful places to learn.

We also recognize the families, community leaders, and local stakeholders whose partnership and support strengthen our public schools—and, most importantly, the students themselves, who bring our schools to life each day.

As this new academic year gathers momentum, the Horace Mann League extends its gratitude to everyone who plays a role in the life of a public school. Your work matters. Your commitment matters. And together, you help create the opportunities that allow every student to learn, grow, succeed, and pursue their dreams.

On behalf of the Horace Mann League family, thank you for your continued leadership and steadfast commitment to public education.

(Photography by James Minichello)

Feature Stories



Even 2nd Graders Are Leaders in My School. Here's What That Looks Like (Opinion)

by Emery Brown for *Education Week*

A young kid showing off a lanyard reminded me what the best principals have in common.

[Read More](#)



Here's How Districts Aim to Prevent Tech Overload

by Micah Ward / *District Administration*

Screen time is now the biggest threat to student success. Officials are betting on bell-to-bell bans to reverse academic declines.

[Read More](#)



Are Student Attention Spans Really Shrinking?

by Stephen Merrill, Youki Terada / *Edutopia*

It's not a mirage-students are struggling to focus like never before. But shorter attention spans may not be the culprit, experts explain.

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Issues of the Week



More Kids Get STEM Content in After-School Programs

by Evie Blad / *Education Week*

Many more students have access to science- and math-focused programs today than a decade ago.

[Read More](#)



Has test-optional admissions worked in Colorado? A report shows the state isn't entirely sure.

by Jason Gonzales / *Chalkbeat*

The report says the pandemic influenced its inconclusive data findings. But state experts say the policy still shows promising student impact.

[Read More](#)



One of the Nation's Biggest Districts Promotes a New Leader

by Matt Zalaznick / *District Administration*

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has promoted Rafael A. Villalobos as its new superintendent, 32 years after he joined the district.

[Read More](#)

Leadership Ideas



Back-To-School Advice Every Leader Needs To Remember

by Maria Ross / Forbes

The advice we give our kids every August is timeless leadership wisdom. Be curious. Ask for help. Learn from mistakes. Here's why leaders need to take their own advice.

[Read More](#)



The Leadership Advantage AI Can't Automate: Learning to Trust Your Inner Signals

by Moshe Engelberg for *Inc.*

As AI accelerates execution, leaders who develop internal sensing can strengthen the intuition, empathy, and judgment tech can't replace.

[Read More](#)



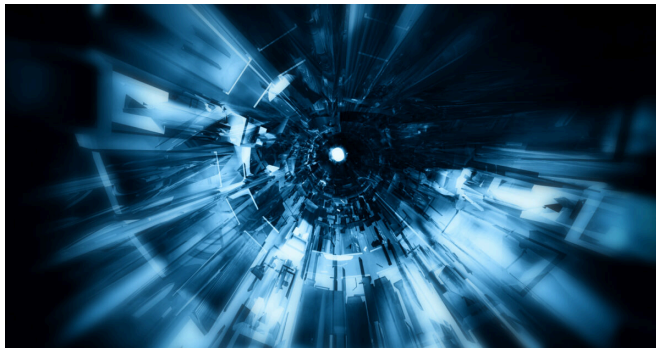
Setting Up a Committee Is Easy-Making Sure You Hear From Everyone Takes Effort

by **Lauren Kaufman / Edutopia**

Inviting participants to the table is not enough. School leaders can use this framework to ensure that everyone has meaningful ways to contribute.

[Read More](#)

AI



AI in the Classroom - Moving Beyond Challenges to Innovation

by **Christy Matte / ISTE**

Author, speaker, and educator Rachelle Dené Poth believes that AI can transform classrooms for students and teachers through thoughtful and ethical use.

[Read More](#)



District HR leaders: Keep Humans in Decision-making as AI's Presence Grows

by Anna Merod / *K-12 Dive*

With artificial intelligence gaining steam in school districts, some human resource leaders also say the technology can help them be more efficient.

[Read More](#)



The Bargaining Table Is Writing America's Workplace AI Rules

by Gleb Tsipursky / *CEOWORLD Magazine*

A new report shows that union contracts are becoming one of the strongest practical safeguards American workers have against disruptive workplace AI. The NewsGuild-CWA now has roughly 85 to 90 contracts with explicit AI provisions, while agreements in journalism, entertainment, and video games increasingly require notice, consent, bargaining, or limits on replacement.

[Read More](#)

Share Your Story With the League

One of the greatest strengths of the Horace Mann League is the remarkable work our members do every day on behalf of students, schools, and communities.



As a new academic year gets underway, we want to hear what's happening in your schools, districts, organizations, and communities. We invite you to share your accomplishments—or those of a member of your staff—including publications, awards, leadership transitions, innovative programs, noteworthy events, and other news that may be of interest to fellow members.

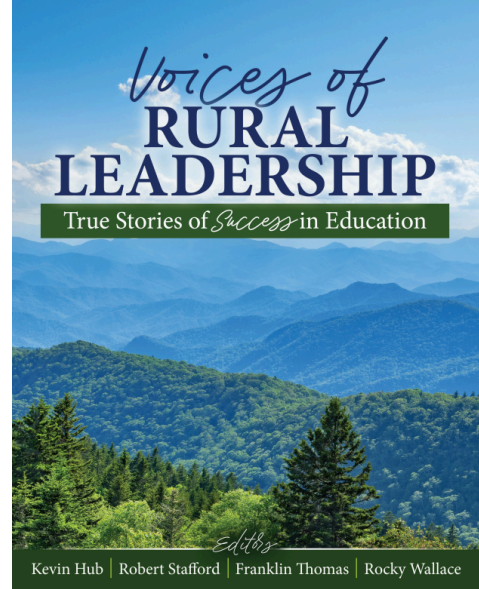
Your stories help strengthen our community, celebrate the important work taking place across the country, and inspire fellow League members. As we plan upcoming editions of *The Post*, we hope you'll share your story with us.

Please send submissions and ideas to James Minichello, executive director of the Horace Mann League, at jminichello@hmleague.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Featured Book

This powerful collection features authentic accounts from a distinguished group of educators and community learners who are deeply committed to serving students and families in rural America.

Each story aligns with the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and offers practical insight, inspiration, and proven strategies. Whether you are a leadership faculty member, aspiring administrator, or seasoned practitioner, this book is a valuable resource for fostering growth, resilience, and innovation in educational leadership.



Spotlight Conversations



Kenneth Spells, Superintendent of North Carolina's **Hoke County Schools**

"The Horace Mann League has always been a champion for public schools. I want today's students to have even more opportunities than I had and to be prepared to seize them when they arise."



Tobin Novasio, Superintendent of Montana's **Hardin Public Schools**

"In rural education, our greatest strength is the power of relationships."

"The future of rural communities depends on our ability to attract, support, and retain great educators."



Louis Wool, Superintendent of New York's Harrison Central School District

"If we don't see that connection, that very precious thing that has defined my life, given me so much opportunity, can soon be gone. And when we lose public school, in my mind, we lose America."



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](#)

Special Reports for League Members

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

1. [Wisdom and Leadership](#) (updated on May 11, 2026)
 2. [Letters to the Editor from the Superintendent](#) (updated on June 9 2026)
 3. [Arguments by Conservatives to Diminish Public Schools. \(New\)](#)
 4. [OP-ED Letters to the Editor: Ideological and Policy Arguments About Public Education \(new\)](#)
 5. [Most Common Theories of Leadership](#)
 6. [Long-Range Planning](#)
 7. [Quotes for Leadership](#)
 8. [Good to Great: The Guide to the Superintendent's Success](#)
 9. [The Blueberry Story: Operating Schools Like a Business.](#)
 10. [What Teachers Make: Wow! You Asked Me What I make?](#)
 11. [Better Interview Questions and Possible Responses](#)
 12. [Suggestions Guidelines for Better Presentations](#)
 13. [Opening the Schoolhouse Door for Patrons](#)
 14. [Signals in the Life of the Superintendent](#)
 15. [Best Leadership Quotes of All](#)
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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 Furlis

Andi Furlis 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 Ganea

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 Furlis.

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)

The School Leader's Special Topics

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)
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[Website](#)

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[Get In Touch](#)

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Past Presidents

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Dr. Theresa Rouse,
Supt, Joliet Schools, (IL)

Dr. Ray Sanchez
Supt. of Schools

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 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

The Horace Mann League Past Presidents

2025 Kevin Riley, (NE)
2024 Brent Clark, (IL)
2023 Bill Mathis (VT)
2022 Ruben Alejandro (TX)
2021 James Harvey (WA)
2020 Lisa Parady AK
2019 Laurie Barron, MT
2018 Eric King, IL
2017 Martha Bruckner IA
2016 Christine Johns, MI
2015 Charles Fowler, NH
2014 Gary Marx, VA
2013 Joe Hairston, MD
2012 Mark Edwards NC
2011 Julie Underwood, WI
2010 George Garcia, CO
2009 Steve Rasmussen, WA
2008 Fred Hartmeister, TX
2007 Colleen Wilcox, CA
2006 Walt Warfield, IL
2005 John Simpson, VA
2004 Spike Jorgensen, AK
2003 Larry Dlugosh NE
2002 Arthur Stellar, MI
2001 Ben Canada, OR
2000 Kenneth Bird NE
1999 Beverly Reep OH
1998 Jane Hammond CO
1997 Cleve Hammonds MO
1996 Terry Grier, CA
1995 Paul Houston, VA
1994 Edna Manning, OK
1993 Malcolm Katz, GA
1992 Bob Fortenberry, MS
1991 Ron Etheridge, OH
1990 John Prasch NE
1989 Jack Mawdsley, MI
1988 Linton Deck NC
1987 Patrick Hoban WA
1986 M Donald Thomas UT
1985 Anne Campbell NE
1984 Floyd W. Parsons AR
1983 Paul Shelly NJ
1982 Orvin Plucker KS
1981 Albert Ayers VA
1980 Ken Hansen CO

Tarrytown, NY
Dr. Michael Simeck,
 Supt. Deerfield 109 (IL).
Dr. Kenneth Spells,
 Supt., Hoke County
 School District, Raeford,
 NC
Dr. Jerry Thacker, Supt.
 Penn-Harris-Madison
 School, Mishawaka, (IN)
Dr. Louis N. Wool,
 Supt of School, Harrison
 Central School District
 (NY)
Dr. Greg Wyman
 Exec. Dir., Arizona Rural
 Schools Association

Executive Director
 of the HML
James Minichello
 Alexandria, VA

**Past Executive
 Directors**
 2025 Jack McKay
 2023-24 Jeanne Collins
 1993-23 Jack McKay
 1992-93 Paul Rossey
 1977-91 Robert
 Fleischer
 1972-77 Clayton
 Hutchins
 1963-71 William Early
 1959-63 Benjamin Smith
 1955-59 E.I. Williams
 1946-54 Joy Elmer
 Morgan
 1925-45 Carroll Pearse
 1924 Robert Wright
 1923 John R. Kirk
 1922 John A. Smith

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.

1979 Homer Elseroad CO
 1978 W J. House NC
 1977 Paul Rossey NJ
 1976 Charles Weaver NC
 1975 Frank Yulo CT
 1974 Archibald Shaw MI
 1973 George Brain WA
 1972 Mildred F. Reed DC
 1971 Eugene Mellon IL
 1970 Walter Hetzel IA
 1968 Chester Swanson CA
 1967 Phillip Weaver NC
 1966 Edward Rutter CT
 1965 Shirley Cooper WV
 1964 Lynn Bennion UT
 1963 John L Buford IL
 1962 Frank W. Cyr NY
 1960 L. Stacy Weaver NC
 1959 Edgar Fuller DC
 1958 Richard Kennan MD
 1957 Henry H. Hill TN
 1955 Selmer H. Berg CA
 1953 Virgil Rogers VA
 1951 Mark A. Smith GA
 1950 Benjamin L. Smith NC
 1948 I. E. F. Williams OH
 1947 James Edmonson MI
 1946 Howard Driggs NY
 1944 Homer Anderson MA
 1942 Harold J.
 Benjamin MD
 1941 L.J. Nuttall UT
 1940 Alexander Stoddard RI
 1939 Willard Given DC
 1938 John Sexton CA
 1937 Millard Leffler NE
 1936 Ben G. Graham PA
 1935 John K. Norton NY
 1934 H Lester Smith IN
 1933 E.E. Oberholtzer TX
 1932 Fred M. Hunter OR
 1931 George Strayer NY
 1930 George M. Child UT
 1926 Payson Smith ME
 1922 Carroll Pearse WI



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