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**An Honorary Association of
Public Education Leaders**

June 9, 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.

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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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Spotlight Conversations

The Interview with Superintendent

Dr. Louis Wool by James Minichello

‘We Are Public School Advocates’: Spotlight Conversations with Louis Wool

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 Louis Wool, superintendent of New York’s **Harrison Central School District**, a learning community serving more than 3,800 students. Supt. Wool is a member of the Horace Mann League’s Board of Directors.

HML: Superintendent Wool, thank you so much for participating in this interview. First, let’s talk about the impact the Harrison Central School District has on its community.

LW: I spent 18 years in an urban district where 85% of the students qualified for free and reduced-price lunch, and the student population was predominantly African American. That district is about 15 minutes from where I’m sitting right now. I watched kids deliberately disenfranchised from opportunity. I was the director of a magnet school program whose theory was that if you could improve the quality of the curriculum, you could convince White people to come to school with Black kids. I did my research on that and found it was inherently wrong. It rarely worked.

I spent all my time there improving the curriculum and elevating the professional development of that faculty. Even though we didn’t get White folks to come to school with Black kids, the quality of education and the outcomes for those kids improved.

Fast-forward, and I arrive in Harrison, where resources are more abundant, and the population is more economically diverse. We appear to be a wealthy district, but the reality is more complex. My high school is currently about 25% free and reduced-price lunch. I have one elementary school where more than 30% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch, and another where less than 1% do. But I have always believed that public education should elevate all kids, which aligns with Horace Mann's vision.

I hope the impact and outcomes I'm having on the Harrison community are reaching the broader education community. Here, there are no prerequisites for participation in any program. Regarding the International Baccalaureate program, 100% of my high school students participate. We have removed all the structural barriers to participation. I don't believe in virtue signaling. I believe in virtuous work; those are two very different things.

About 14 years ago, the district decided to pay for everyone's exam fees. We removed that final barrier. Today, both the International Baccalaureate Organization and *U.S. News & World Report* rank our high school among the top 2% worldwide for academic performance. I'm proud of the academic outcome, but even more proud of the message it sends—that you can build a system that is authentically inclusive, with no prerequisites for participation, and still be high-performing. My goal in staying here for more than 1/4 century, 24 years as superintendent, is to prove that when you lead with the nonnegotiable value that every child has inherent worth, when you invest in professional development, remove structural barriers, and provide actual opportunities for kids, public schools can fulfill their ultimate mission: elevating every student into a vibrant democracy.

HML: What PD programs are gaining traction among staff?

LW: I was an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction before I became a superintendent. Too often, professional development becomes the 'flavor of the month.' Or you encourage teachers to earn graduate credits simply to move up the salary schedule. You don't have a unified approach to teaching and learning and the professional development that supports it. People are often not engaged in a systemic approach to teaching and learning. I changed that model in 2003. It was probably one of the most strategic shifts I ever got union leadership to partner with me on. Teachers no longer have to go out shopping for graduate credits to earn salary increases.

We offer free in-house professional development aligned with the district's areas of focus, and if you complete it, you will advance on the salary schedule at no cost. We became a full International Baccalaureate district just this year. All four of my elementary schools entered the program together; IB told us we couldn't do that, and we reminded them that in our district, everybody moves or nobody moves.

We prioritize certain initiatives in the system, but we do so systematically. For example, each year we run professional development sessions to enhance co-teaching partnerships. It's a clear example of being fully committed to structural reforms that are meaningful for kids. It's one thing to have co-teaching; it's

another thing to support it. If a co-teaching pair is teaching together for the first time, you are provided a course where you learn and prepare together. You're paid for that. What distinguishes our approach is its unified, systemic nature. It always comes back to our core belief that if you believe that everyone should be included, then you have to demonstrate it structurally and in principle.

HML: Given the teaching and learning excellence underway in the school buildings at Harrison Central School District, talk about the positive school culture that's going on within the hallways, the classrooms, the playgrounds, and the gymnasiums.

LW: That is a profound and important question because many throw around a lot of acronyms, SEL, DEI, and inclusivity. We have never jumped on a particular bandwagon. Instead, we do virtuous work. So, if you were going to examine my district to determine whether we're meeting the needs of all kids, the first thing I would tell you to examine is our structures: There's nothing that prevents any child from participating. But on the culture side, the reason I selected IB back in 1999, when I was assistant superintendent, was that it offered a broader vision of community than I was seeing in most educational models.

In a community like mine, it is mistakenly seen as homogeneous, but it is extremely economically diverse. Over the years, it has also become much more ethnically diverse. The IB approach, simply put, is to teach students how to think, not what to think. Understanding and valuing another person's perspective is not an occasional lesson—it is embedded throughout the curriculum. Over time, those principles become the culture itself.

We have four core values: equity, meaning everyone gets what they need; access, meaning no one is denied opportunity because of a lack of resources; and rigor, which looks different for every student. In the fourth, adaptability underlies them all—the belief that the system must adapt to the people within it. If you don't feel comfortable, it's the system's responsibility to adapt to you.

There are three theories of action to drive our leadership, which were selected and honed over many years, and seamlessly weave into our approach to guiding. The first is transformational leadership. If you don't treat everybody in this organization as having inherent worth, you can't work here. If I see any difference between how you treat me and how you treat the head custodian, you will not be here.

The message is that everyone has inherent worth. The second theory is distributed leadership, the belief that nobody can do this on their own. Everybody has a responsibility for everything. We were the first district in the country to equip all cell phones with panic buttons for everyone who works here, including school aides and school monitors. Anyone in this district can lock down the school by opening their phone and pressing a button. The message is that everybody matters.

The third, which is the hardest to live by—and the one that makes people most uncomfortable—is adaptive leadership theory. The belief that you can simply tell

people what to do and expect lasting change is a misconception. You have to bring people along by changing hearts and minds.

The next time you're waiting in line at Starbucks and see a barista who's overwhelmed, simply saying, 'I appreciate your efforts,' can completely change the moment. Those small exchanges define who we are not only as educators but also as leaders.

HML: What is a particular challenge the school district is addressing?

LW: I'm going to echo what you said earlier, 'What is the impact on the community?' As a veteran superintendent, I'm in my fourth term as president of the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents, which comprises four counties and about 78 superintendents. I believe the superintendency has become even more complicated than it was in the past. I feel that the existential threats facing public education must be addressed regionally. The risk I face every day, even though I'm in a high-resource district, is that my mission is highly controversial because it pushes back against people who think that, in order to be high-performing, excluding some kids is a good idea. My belief is that anything that diverts public funds from public education is an existential threat. I'm working both regionally and at the state level to ensure public dollars are not consistently siphoned away from public schools. Even though it wouldn't necessarily devastate me, anything that diminishes the public schools around me, and there are urban school systems around me that are already being devastated, is bad for public education. Public education is what will ultimately provide us with the kind of vision that America aspires to, and it's all of our work to protect it

What I like to remind my colleagues and my school board is that if you saw a child on the side of the road in trouble, you'd get out to help them. We are not public schools of Harrison. We are public school advocates. And if we don't see that connection, this 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.

HML: With the academic school year ending, what are you most proud of?

LW: It took me almost 20 years to make my system a full International Baccalaureate system. As you well know, you can't just make these maneuvers; you have to prepare the system, and we did so meticulously. I was very proud of the organization pushing back on IB, which said you can't bring in four schools at the same time. It's never been done. And I was insistent that we wouldn't have a curriculum at one of my schools that I couldn't have at the other 4, so we completed that task.

Here is the other thing I'm proud of. Nationally, there is a trend of declining birth rates, and it's the same internationally. Across New York State, most school districts are seeing declining enrollment, and my school system is growing rapidly. We added more than 250 students over a two-year period. People are relocating from other parts of the country, specifically to join this school community. I think what makes me proudest is talking to those people. Many of

them are educators who have figured out what we're doing. The more people who understand the significance of what we've achieved, the more likely we are to sustain it. I'm proud of that.

I've had four retirements this year, and all of them have been filled internally. Because I've been working with Bank Street College for 18 years, every 2 years I select 5 or 6 teachers to join the Bank Street Future School Leaders Academy and mentor them myself throughout that 2-year period. When we're looking for candidates, they're not only internal but also well-versed in our approach to leading and teaching.

HML: What does it mean to you to be part of the leadership of the Horace Mann League?

LW: I've been a member of the Horace Mann League since 2002. I was invited by a respected colleague. The League's message is more important than ever. It is everybody's job to protect public schools. Public education is part of a thriving democracy and helps prepare young people to participate in it. But it can't be limited to some young people—it must include all young people.

HML: Any final comments before we say “good-bye?”

LW: I spend a lot of time mentoring young superintendents. For new administrators, I run a principal study group. They always ask me why I've stayed at it so long and what they need to be aware of. Here's what I tell them: I am completely devoted to what I do. It is my life. If you're a young administrator reading this, be focused and zealous, but also mindful that you need to tend to both parts of your life.

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



William J. Mathis, Past President of the Horace Mann League

Educator, Superintendent, Scholar, and Advocate for Public Education

William J. Mathis, who recently passed, devoted more than six decades to advancing public education as a teacher, superintendent, state education leader, researcher, and national policy advocate. He served for 27 years as superintendent of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union in Brandon, Vermont, where he earned widespread respect for his steadfast commitment to students, educators, and communities. He was recognized as Vermont Superintendent of the Year and was a finalist for National Superintendent of the Year.



Beyond Vermont, Dr. Mathis became a prominent national voice on education policy. He served as Managing Director of the National Education Policy Center and later as Senior Policy Advisor, contributing influential research and commentary on school finance, assessment, accountability, vouchers, and the democratic purposes of public education. Bill received the Horace Mann League's "**Outstanding Friend of Public Education**", served the League's Board of Directors, and served as President in 2023.

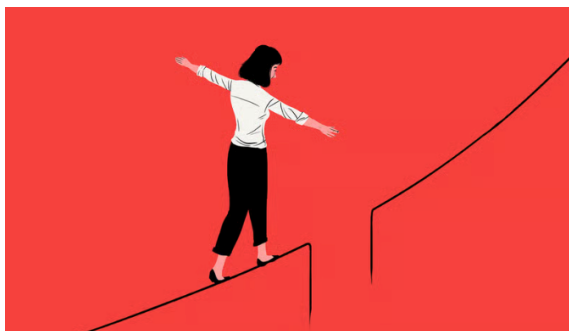
His leadership extended to service on the Vermont State Board of Education, including as vice chair, where he championed educational opportunity and thoughtful public policy. Throughout his career, he remained a passionate defender of public schools as essential institutions of democracy and civic life.

Known for his intellect, humility, and unwavering dedication to children, Bill Mathis combined scholarly rigor with practical wisdom gained from years of school leadership. His writings, speeches, and mentorship influenced educators and policymakers across the nation.

Dr. Mathis leaves a lasting legacy of service, integrity, and advocacy for the ideal that every child deserves access to a high-quality public education. He will be remembered not only for his professional accomplishments, but also for his kindness, thoughtful counsel, and enduring belief in the power of public schools to strengthen communities and democracy.

The Most Relevant and Practical Leadership Theories

These leadership theories have strong research support and practical application in schools, businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations.

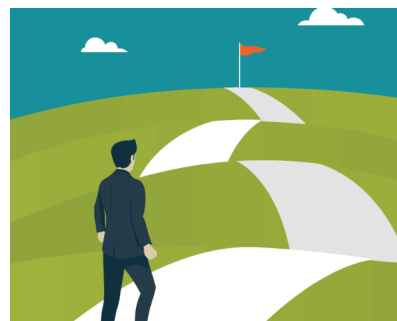


Leadership Theory Description Practical Application

- 1. Transformational Leadership:** Leaders inspire people through a compelling vision, shared values, and personal example. They motivate followers to achieve more than they thought possible. Create a clear vision, inspire commitment, encourage innovation, and develop future leaders.
 - 2. Servant Leadership:** Leaders focus on serving others first. Their primary goal is to help people grow, succeed, and reach their potential. Listen actively, remove barriers, support professional growth, and build trust.
 - 3. Situational Leadership:** Developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, this theory argues that leaders should adapt their style based on followers' competence and commitment levels. Provide direction to novices, coaching to learners, support to developing employees, and delegation to experienced performers.
 - 4. Authentic Leadership:** Effective leaders are self-aware, transparent, ethical, and guided by their core values rather than external pressures. Build credibility through honesty, consistency, and ethical decision-making.
 - 5. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory:** Leadership effectiveness depends on the quality of relationships between leaders and followers. High-trust relationships lead to greater engagement and performance. Invest time in building positive, respectful relationships with all team members.
 - 6. Adaptive Leadership:** Developed by Ronald Heifetz, this theory focuses on helping organizations navigate complex challenges where solutions are unclear. Facilitate learning, encourage experimentation, and help teams adapt to changing conditions.
 - 7. Distributed (Shared) Leadership:** Leadership is viewed as a collective activity rather than something exercised solely by people with formal authority.
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Leadership Theories and the Superintendency, by Jack McKay

For a school superintendent, all seven leadership theories have value, but they are not equally important. The reality is that successful superintendents blend several theories depending on the challenge they face.



Ranking the Seven Leadership Theories for School Superintendents

1. Adaptive Leadership (Most Important for the Next Five Years)

Best for: AI, enrollment decline, political polarization, school choice, staffing shortages, and changing community expectations.

Why it ranks first:

- Most superintendent challenges today have no clear solution.
- Communities often disagree on both the problem and the solution.
- Adaptive leadership helps organizations learn and adjust rather than simply implement known answers.

Key Superintendent Question:

"How do we help our district adapt to a future that is uncertain?"

2. Transformational Leadership

Best for: Creating district vision and building momentum.

Why it ranks second:

- Schools need a compelling vision to move beyond managing day-to-day operations.
- People support change when they understand the purpose behind it.

Key Superintendent Question:

"Can I inspire people to believe in a better future?"

3. Authentic Leadership

Best for: Building trust and credibility.

Why it ranks third:

- Public trust is increasingly important.
- Staff, parents, and boards can quickly detect inconsistency or insincerity.

Key Superintendent Question:

"Do people trust my motives and integrity?"

4. Distributed (Shared) Leadership

Best for: Building organizational capacity.

Why it ranks fourth:

- No superintendent can personally lead every initiative.
- Great districts develop principals, teacher leaders, and cabinet members who share leadership responsibilities.

Key Superintendent Question:

"Am I creating more leaders or more followers?"

5. Servant Leadership

Best for: Culture and morale.

Why it ranks fifth:

- Schools are relationship-driven organizations.
- Leaders who support and develop others often create stronger cultures.

Key Superintendent Question:

"How can I help others succeed?"

6. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

Best for: Building trust with key personnel.

Why it ranks sixth:

- Relationships matter greatly in schools.
- Strong superintendent-principal and superintendent-board relationships often determine success.

Caution:

LMX can become problematic if some staff perceive favoritism.

Key Superintendent Question:

"Am I building high-trust relationships broadly across the organization?"

7. Situational Leadership

Best for: Day-to-day management.

Why it ranks seventh:

- Useful for supervising and developing employees.
- Less useful as an overarching leadership philosophy for a district.

Key Superintendent Question:

"What kind of support does this person need right now?"

The Leadership Formula for Today's Superintendent

If I were designing a leadership model for a superintendent in 2026, it would look like this:

30% Adaptive Leadership

Navigate uncertainty and change.

25% Transformational Leadership

Create vision and momentum.

20% Authentic Leadership

Build trust and credibility.

15% Distributed Leadership

Develop leadership capacity.

10% Servant Leadership

Support people and culture.

Situational Leadership and LMX become tactical tools used as needed.

Example: Implementing AI in a School District

Adaptive Leadership

- Recognize that nobody fully understands AI's long-term impact.

Transformational Leadership

- Create a vision for preparing students for an AI-rich future.

Authentic Leadership

- Admit uncertainties while remaining optimistic.

Distributed Leadership

- Empower principals and teacher leaders to experiment.

Servant Leadership

- Support staff through the transition.

Situational Leadership

- Provide different levels of support depending on staff readiness.

LMX

- Build trust with key leaders guiding implementation.

Twenty years ago, Instructional Leadership might have been the dominant theory for superintendents. **Today, the most effective superintendent is primarily an Adaptive Leader** who uses Transformational Leadership to create vision, Authentic Leadership to build trust, and Distributed Leadership to develop the organization's capacity to respond to change. The future belongs to leaders who can help people navigate uncertainty while maintaining confidence and purpose.

The Leadership Challenge Authors:

James Kouzes and Barry Posner

Based on decades of research involving thousands of leaders worldwide, The Leadership Challenge identifies the behaviors that enable ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results. The authors organize effective leadership around the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.

1. Leadership Is a Learnable Skill

Leadership is not reserved for people with special titles or innate talents. Anyone can develop leadership abilities through practice, experience, and intentional effort.

2. Model the Way

Effective leaders clarify their values and set an example through their actions. They align their behavior with the standards they expect from others, demonstrating integrity and consistency.

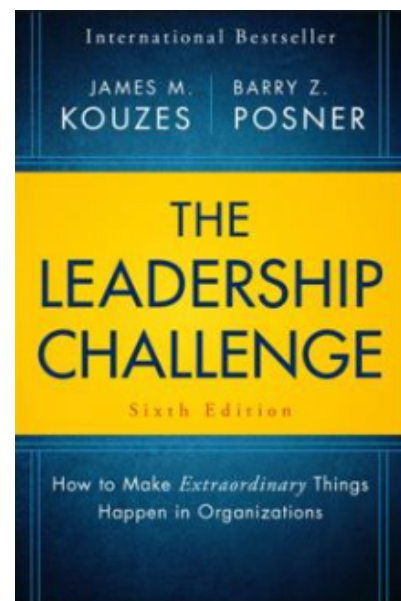
3. Inspire a Shared Vision

Great leaders create a compelling picture of the future and help others see how they can contribute to achieving it. They connect organizational goals to people's hopes and aspirations.

4. Challenge the Process

Leaders seek opportunities to innovate, improve, and grow. They are willing to question the status quo, experiment with new ideas, and learn from mistakes.

5. Enable Others to Act



Successful leaders build trust, foster collaboration, and empower others. They recognize that leadership is not about personal power but about strengthening the capacity of the entire team.

6. Encourage the Heart

People perform better when they feel appreciated. Leaders celebrate accomplishments, recognize contributions, and create a culture where effort and success are acknowledged.

7. Credibility Is the Foundation of Leadership

The authors found that followers consistently value leaders who are honest, competent, forward-looking, and inspiring. Without credibility, leadership influence is diminished.

8. Leadership Is a Relationship

Leadership is fundamentally about relationships rather than authority. Effective leaders build trust, respect, and mutual commitment with those they lead.

9. Small Actions Matter

Extraordinary leadership often comes from consistent daily behaviors rather than dramatic gestures. Leaders build trust and influence through repeated acts of integrity, encouragement, and service.

10. Leadership Creates Extraordinary Results

When leaders practice these behaviors consistently, teams become more engaged, innovative, resilient, and effective. The result is improved performance and a stronger organizational culture.

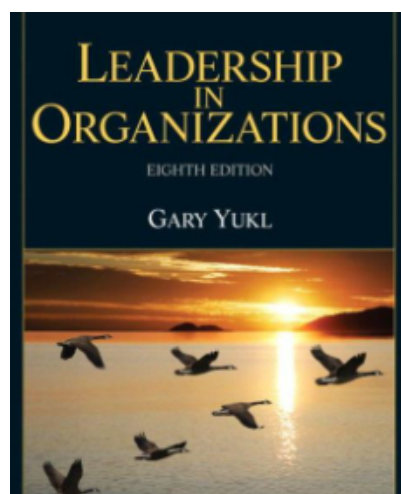
The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

1. Model the Way
2. Inspire a Shared Vision
3. Challenge the Process
4. Enable Others to Act
5. Encourage the Heart

The central message of *The Leadership Challenge* is that leadership is a set of observable behaviors, not a position or personality trait. By consistently practicing the Five Practices, leaders can inspire others, build trust, and achieve exceptional results.

Leadership in Organizations Author Gary Yukl

Leadership in Organizations is one of the most respected research-based leadership texts. Yukl synthesizes decades of organizational and leadership research to explain how leaders influence individuals, teams, and organizations. Rather than promoting a single leadership style, he emphasizes adapting leadership behaviors to the situation.



1. Leadership Is a Process of Influence

Leadership is not merely a position or title. It is the process of influencing others to understand, agree on, and achieve shared objectives.

2. Effective Leadership Requires Multiple Behaviors

No single leadership style works in all situations. Effective leaders use a combination of task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and change-oriented behaviors.

3. Task-Oriented Leadership Improves Performance

Leaders help teams succeed by clarifying goals, planning work, coordinating activities, monitoring progress, and solving problems.

4. Relationship-Oriented Leadership Builds Commitment

Leaders increase motivation and trust by supporting employees, showing respect, recognizing contributions, and developing positive working relationships.

5. Change-Oriented Leadership Drives Innovation

Organizations must adapt to changing environments. Effective leaders encourage learning, innovation, experimentation, and continuous improvement.

6. Leadership Effectiveness Depends on the Situation

Yukl reviews contingency theories showing that leadership effectiveness is influenced by factors such as organizational culture, team maturity, task complexity, and environmental uncertainty.

7. Power and Influence Must Be Used Wisely

Leaders draw on different sources of power, including expertise, relationships, formal authority, and personal credibility. The most effective leaders rely more on influence and trust than on coercion.

8. Decision-Making Quality Matters

Leaders must balance participation and efficiency when making decisions. Involving team members often improves decision quality, commitment, and implementation.

9. Ethics Are Central to Leadership

Ethical leadership builds trust, legitimacy, and long-term organizational success. Leaders must consider the impact of their actions on employees, stakeholders, and society.

10. Leadership Is a Shared Organizational Capability

Leadership is not limited to top executives. Organizations perform best when leadership is distributed across teams and individuals at multiple levels.

Yukl's Three Major Categories of Leadership Behavior

Task-Oriented Behaviors

- Planning
- Organizing
- Clarifying roles
- Monitoring operations
- Solving problems

Relationship-Oriented Behaviors

- Supporting others
- Developing people
- Recognizing contributions
- Building teamwork
- Empowering employees

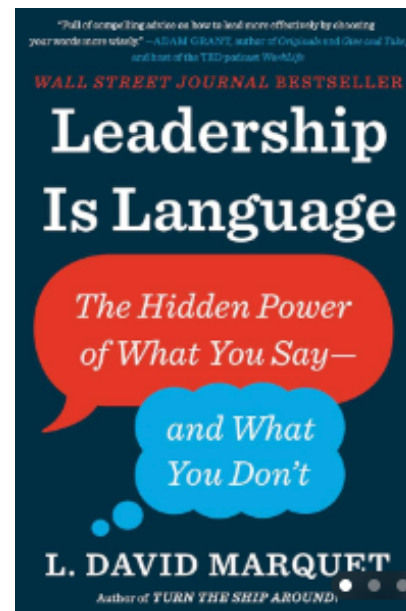
Change-Oriented Behaviors

- Creating vision
- Encouraging innovation
- Leading transformation
- Promoting learning
- Adapting to change

Effective leadership requires balancing task accomplishment, relationship development, and organizational change. Great leaders adapt their behavior to the needs of the situation while maintaining trust, ethical standards, and a focus on long-term effectiveness. His work remains one of the most comprehensive and evidence-based frameworks for understanding leadership in modern organizations. Your copy should address 3 key questions: Who am I writing for (audience)? Why should they care (benefit)? What do I want them to do (call to action)?

Leadership Is Language: The Hidden Power of What You Say—and What You Don't. Author L. David Marquet

In Leadership Is Language, Marquet argues that many organizations still operate under a command-and-control communication style designed for the Industrial Age. In today's complex and rapidly changing environment, leaders achieve better results by changing how they communicate. The language leaders use shapes thinking, decision-making, accountability, and performance.



1. Language Shapes Organizational Behavior

The words leaders use influence how people think, act, collaborate, and solve problems. Leadership is not just about decisions—it is also about communication patterns.

2. Move from Command-and-Control to Collaboration

Traditional leadership often relies on directing and controlling. Modern organizations perform better when leaders create conditions that encourage participation, initiative, and shared responsibility.

3. Replace Permission-Seeking with Ownership

Employees should not be trained to constantly ask for permission. Leaders should encourage people to think independently and take responsibility for decisions within their areas of expertise.

4. Create a Culture of Thinking

Leaders should ask questions that stimulate analysis and judgment rather than simply providing answers. The goal is to develop thinkers, not followers.

5. Shift from Telling to Asking

Powerful questions promote engagement and learning. Leaders who ask thoughtful questions help teams discover solutions and build confidence.

6. Encourage Learning Through Reflection

High-performing organizations regularly pause to reflect on what happened, why it happened, and what can be improved. Reflection transforms experience into learning.

7. Make Decision-Making More Inclusive

Better decisions often emerge when leaders invite diverse perspectives and encourage open discussion before conclusions are reached.

8. Focus on Future-Oriented Conversations

Instead of dwelling excessively on blame or past mistakes, leaders should guide discussions toward learning, improvement, and future action.

9. Build Psychological Safety

People contribute more effectively when they feel safe speaking up, sharing ideas, raising concerns, and challenging assumptions without fear of punishment.

10. Leaders Design the Conversation Environment

The leader's most important job is not having all the answers but creating conversations that allow the organization to think, learn, adapt, and perform at its best.

Key Language Shifts Marquet Recommends

Instead of...Try...

"Here's what we're going to do." "What are our options?"

"Who made this mistake?" "What can we learn from this?"

"Tell me when it's done." "What is your plan?"

"I need approval." "I intend to..."

"Follow instructions." "Use your judgment."

Four Leadership Conversation Patterns

Marquet describes a shift from the traditional pattern of:

1. Decide
2. Direct
3. Do
4. Evaluate

to a more effective model:

1. Observe
2. Orient
3. Decide
4. Act

This approach encourages continuous learning, adaptation, and shared ownership.

The central message of Leadership Is Language is that the language leaders use determines whether people become passive followers or active contributors. By changing conversations from commands to curiosity, from permission to ownership, and from blame to learning, leaders create organizations that are more innovative, adaptable, and resilient.

Seven Leadership Principles Shared Across the Three Books

Several common themes emerge. Although the authors come from different backgrounds—leadership research, organizational science, and military leadership—they largely agree on what effective leaders do.



1. Build Trust Through Credibility and Integrity

All three books emphasize that leadership begins with trust.

- Kouzes and Posner: Model the Way.
- Yukl: Ethical leadership and credibility are essential.
- Marquet: Trust allows people to think and act independently.

Leadership practice:

- Keep commitments.
- Be transparent.
- Align actions with stated values.
- Admit mistakes.

2. Create and Communicate a Compelling Vision

People perform better when they understand where the organization is going and why it matters.

- Kouzes and Posner: Inspire a Shared Vision.
- Yukl: Leaders provide direction and strategic focus.
- Marquet: Conversations should orient people toward the future.

Leadership practice:

- Explain the purpose behind goals.
- Connect daily work to a larger mission.
- Repeatedly communicate priorities.

3. Empower Others Rather Than Control Them

Leadership is less about exercising authority and more about enabling others to succeed.

- Kouzes and Posner: Enable Others to Act.
- Yukl: Empowerment increases commitment and performance.
- Marquet: Shift from permission-seeking to ownership.

Leadership practice:

- Delegate decision-making.
- Develop others' capabilities.
- Trust people with meaningful responsibility.

4. Foster Open Communication and Active Listening

Strong leaders create environments where people can contribute ideas and concerns.

- Kouzes and Posner emphasize collaboration.
- Yukl highlights participation and relationship-building.
- Marquet focuses on asking questions instead of issuing commands.

Leadership practice:

- Listen more than you speak.
- Ask thoughtful questions.
- Encourage diverse viewpoints.
- Seek feedback regularly.

5. Encourage Learning, Innovation, and Adaptability

Effective leaders help organizations grow and respond to change.

- Kouzes and Posner: Challenge the Process.
- Yukl: Change-oriented leadership is critical.
- Marquet: Reflection and learning improve decision-making.

Leadership practice:

- Experiment with new ideas.
- Treat mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Encourage continuous improvement.

6. Recognize and Develop People

Leadership is fundamentally about helping others grow.

- Kouzes and Posner: Encourage the Heart.
- Yukl: Support and develop employees.
- Marquet: Build people into independent thinkers.

Leadership practice:

- Acknowledge contributions.
- Coach rather than criticize.
- Invest in professional development.
- Celebrate progress and success.

7. Focus on Relationships, Not Just Results

All three authors argue that sustainable performance comes from strong relationships.

- Kouzes and Posner: Leadership is a relationship.
- Yukl: Relationship-oriented behaviors drive commitment.
- Marquet: Psychological safety improves performance.

Leadership practice:

- Build trust and respect.
- Show empathy.
- Create a culture where people feel valued.
- Balance performance expectations with genuine care for people.

A Practical Leadership Formula

The three books collectively suggest:

Trust + Vision + Empowerment + Communication + Learning + Development + Relationships = Sustainable Leadership Effectiveness

A leader who consistently practices these seven principles will be better equipped to:

- Inspire commitment
- Improve team performance
- Navigate change
- Develop future leaders
- Build a healthy organizational culture

The Most Important Common Thread

Despite their different approaches, all three books reach a similar conclusion:

Leadership is not primarily about authority, expertise, or control. It is about creating the conditions in which other people can perform, grow, contribute, and succeed.

Issues School Leaders Will Face Between Now and 2031

Based on current research, policy trends, demographic changes, technology developments, and the issues most frequently discussed by superintendents and education scholars, I believe the five major issues school leaders will face between now and 2031 are these:



1. Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Learning

Why It Matters

AI is likely to have a greater impact on education than any innovation since the Internet.

School leaders will face questions such as:

- How should students use AI?
- How should teachers use AI?
- How should learning be assessed?
- What skills remain uniquely human?

Challenges

- Academic integrity
- AI literacy
- Privacy concerns
- Teacher training
- Curriculum redesign

Leadership Question

If AI can provide information instantly, what should schools teach that remains uniquely valuable?

2. Enrollment Decline and Competition for Students

Why It Matters

Many districts face:

- Declining birth rates
- School choice expansion
- Charter schools
- Homeschooling
- Private school vouchers

Challenges

- Budget reductions
- School consolidation
- Program cuts
- Staffing adjustments

Leadership Question

Why should families choose our schools?

3. Workforce Recruitment, Retention, and Development

Why It Matters

Schools continue to experience shortages in:

- Special education
- Counseling
- Transportation
- Substitute teaching
- School leadership

Challenges

- Burnout
- Retirement waves
- Leadership succession
- Professional development

Leadership Question

How do we become an employer of choice?

4. Political Polarization and Public Trust

Why It Matters

School leaders increasingly operate in politically charged environments.

Issues include:

- Curriculum debates
- Book challenges
- Cellphone policies
- AI policies
- Diversity and inclusion
- School choice

Challenges

- Community division
- Board conflict
- Public criticism
- Misinformation

Leadership Question

How do we maintain trust among people who disagree about nearly everything?

5. Student Mental Health, Belonging, and Human Connection

Why It Matters

Research increasingly shows that:

- Loneliness is rising
- Anxiety remains high
- Friendship networks are shrinking
- Social skills have been affected by technology

Challenges

- Student well-being
- Attendance
- School climate

- Social-emotional development

Leadership Question

How do we help students flourish as human beings, not merely succeed academically?

Three Additional Issues Close Behind

6. School Finance and Fiscal Sustainability

- Rising costs
- Uncertain state and federal funding
- Facilities needs

7. Cybersecurity and Data Protection

- Ransomware attacks
- Student data privacy
- AI-related security risks

8. Community Relevance

- Demonstrating the value of public education
- Strengthening community partnerships
- Preparing students for a rapidly changing workforce

What These Issues Have in Common

Interestingly, none of these issues are primarily about:

- Buildings
- Buses
- Schedules
- Traditional administration

Instead, they revolve around three themes:

Technology

- AI
- Cybersecurity
- Digital citizenship

Human Capital

- Teachers
- Leaders
- Students

Public Trust

- Community confidence
- Political legitimacy
- Institutional relevance

A Superintendent's Paradox

The next five years will require leaders to:

Confront the brutal facts:

- AI disruption
- Enrollment pressures
- Workforce shortages
- Political conflict

While maintaining faith:

- Public education remains one of America's most important democratic institutions.
- Schools continue to be the primary organizations responsible for developing future citizens and leaders.

The most successful school leaders of the next five years will be those who can simultaneously manage technological disruption, strengthen human relationships, and maintain public trust.

The superintendent's role is evolving from administrator of a school system to adaptive leader of a community institution navigating profound social change.

It's No Wonder Grads Are Booing Their Commencement Speakers

On the NY Times site.



1. **Graduates are reacting to more than just speeches.** The boos heard at several commencement ceremonies are not simply directed at individual speakers. They reflect a broader frustration among graduates about the economic and social conditions they are inheriting.
2. **AI has become a symbol of economic anxiety.** Many commencement speakers encouraged graduates to embrace artificial intelligence, but students often viewed those messages as tone-deaf because AI is increasingly perceived as a threat to entry-level jobs and career opportunities.
3. **A disconnect exists between elites and graduates.** The article argues that wealthy executives and technology leaders often underestimate the concerns of young adults facing student debt, housing costs, economic uncertainty, and a difficult labor market.
4. **Many graduates question whether college still guarantees upward mobility.** Students are increasingly skeptical that a degree alone will provide the middle-class lifestyle that previous generations expected. This uncertainty fuels resentment when speakers offer simple messages of optimism without addressing structural challenges.
5. **The issue is not merely technology—it is trust.** Graduates are expressing a lack of confidence in institutions, business leaders, and policymakers who appear disconnected from their lived experiences. The boos represent a demand to be heard rather than dismissed.
6. **Students want realism and empathy.** Commencement speakers who acknowledge graduates' concerns and uncertainties tend to receive more positive responses than those who simply celebrate technological progress or tell students to adapt.

7. **The backlash signals a broader generational challenge.** The reaction at graduation ceremonies reflects larger questions about: (a) Economic opportunity, (b) Social mobility, (c) The future of work, and (d) The role of AI. Whether institutions are preparing young people for a rapidly changing world.

Implications for School and Community Leaders

For superintendents, college presidents, and civic leaders, the article offers an important lesson:

- Young people want honesty about the challenges ahead.
- They are skeptical of simple assurances that "everything will work out."
- Leaders build credibility when they acknowledge uncertainty while offering a realistic path forward.
- Discussions about AI should address both opportunities and legitimate concerns.

The commencement boos are less a rejection of technology than a signal that many young people feel anxious about their future. They are asking leaders not merely to celebrate innovation, but to address how society will ensure opportunity, meaningful work, and economic mobility in an age of rapid technological change.

Benefits and Consequences of a Full-Day Cellphone Ban in a K–12 School District

A full-day cellphone ban (sometimes called a "bell-to-bell" ban) prohibits student cellphone use from the beginning of the school day until dismissal. While such policies are becoming more common, they bring both advantages and challenges.



A full-day cellphone ban can improve focus, learning, social interaction, and school climate. However, its success depends on thoughtful implementation, consistent enforcement, community support, and a clear explanation that the goal is not punishment but to create an environment where students can learn, connect, and thrive.

Benefits

Consequences and Challenges

1. Parent Resistance

1. Improved Student Attention and Focus

- Reduces distractions from:
- Text messages
- Social media
- Games
- Notifications
- Increases attention during instruction.
- Allows students to engage more fully in learning.

Leadership Question: Are students more focused on learning or on their devices?

2. Better Academic Performance

Research increasingly suggests that reducing phone access can improve:

- Test scores
- Class participation
- Assignment completion
- Benefits are often greatest for struggling students.

3. Improved Student Behavior

- Fewer classroom disruptions.
- Reduced off-task behavior.
- Less conflict over inappropriate phone use.

Teachers spend less time policing devices.

4. Increased Face-to-Face Interaction

- Students are more likely to:
- Talk to one another
- Develop friendships
- Engage in social activities

This may help address concerns about loneliness and social isolation.

5. Reduced Cyberbullying During School Hours

- Fewer opportunities for:
- Harassment
- Rumors
- Social media conflicts
- Many schools report fewer discipline referrals related to online disputes.

6. Improved Mental Health

- Reduced exposure to:
- Social comparison
- Online drama

Some parents want immediate access to their children.

Common concerns:

- Emergencies
- Schedule changes
- Transportation issues

Districts must provide alternative communication methods.

2. Student Pushback

Students often view phones as:

- A social lifeline
- Entertainment
- A personal right

Initial resistance is common.

3. Enforcement Challenges

Questions arise:

- What happens when students violate the rule?
- Who confiscates phones?
- What are the consequences?

Inconsistent enforcement can undermine the policy.

4. Teacher Workload

Teachers may initially spend time:

- Monitoring compliance
- Addressing violations
- Managing parent concerns

Administrative support is critical.

5. Loss of Legitimate Educational Uses

Phones can support:

- Research
- Translation
- Accessibility tools
- Educational apps

A full ban may limit these benefits unless alternatives are provided.

- Constant notifications

Students may experience lower anxiety during the school day.

7. Stronger School Culture

- Creates a shared expectation:
- School is for learning and relationships.
- Encourages engagement in school activities and the community.

8. Greater Equity

- Reduces visible differences in:
- Devices
- Social media status
- Technology access

Students interact more as peers rather than through digital hierarchies.

6. Reduced Student Autonomy

Critics argue that students should learn responsible technology use rather than experience total prohibition.

The question becomes: Are we teaching self-regulation or simply enforcing compliance?

7. Special Circumstances Require Exceptions

Some students use phones for:

- Medical monitoring
- Disability accommodations
- Family responsibilities

Policies must provide flexibility.

8. Community and Political Controversy

Cellphone policies can become symbolic debates about:

- Student rights
- Parental authority
- School control

Leaders should expect public discussion and scrutiny.

Questions a School Board Should Consider

1. What problem are we trying to solve?
2. What evidence supports a full-day ban?
3. How will we enforce the policy consistently?
4. What exceptions are necessary?
5. How will parents communicate with students?
6. How will success be measured?
7. What supports will teachers need?
8. How will we review and adjust the policy?

Superintendent Perspective

A successful cellphone ban is usually less about the policy itself and more about the implementation. Districts that see the greatest benefits typically:

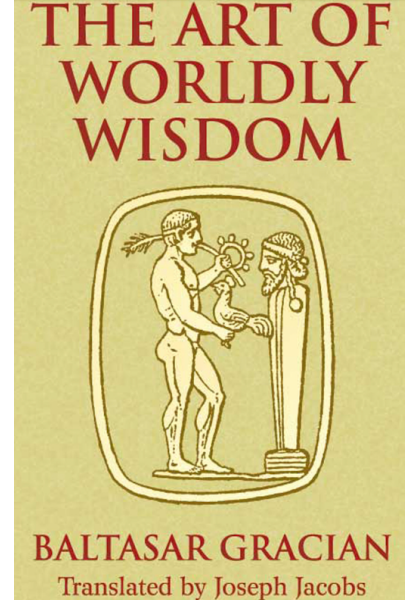
- Clearly communicate the purpose.
- Focus on student learning and well-being.
- Involve students, parents, and staff.
- Enforce expectations consistently.
- Collect data and adjust as needed.

Featured Book and Chapter Highlights

Fortune and Fame from The Art of Worldly Wisdom:

Fortune is fleeting, but reputation endures. The wise person focuses not merely on acquiring success and recognition in the present but on building a legacy of character, service, and achievement that will be remembered long after their position and possessions are gone.

1. **Fortune and fame are fundamentally different:** Gracián distinguishes between fortune (success, wealth, position, and luck during one's lifetime) and fame (the reputation and legacy that endure beyond one's life).
2. **Fortune is temporary; fame is lasting.** Fortune is often unstable and subject to changing circumstances.
3. Fame, when earned through character and achievement, can outlive the individual and endure across generations.
4. **Fortune often depends on circumstances.** Wealth, status, and opportunities are influenced by factors beyond one's control, including luck, timing, and social conditions. Because fortune is partly external, it is inherently uncertain.
5. **Fame must be earned.** Unlike fortune, true reputation comes from sustained excellence, achievement, virtue, and contribution. It cannot be purchased or inherited in the same way that wealth or position sometimes can.
6. **A desire for honorable recognition is natural.** Gracián suggests that the pursuit of a good reputation springs from the noblest part of human nature. Wanting to be remembered for worthy accomplishments can inspire greatness.
7. **Extraordinary reputations provoke strong reactions.** Those who achieve fame often stand apart from the crowd. Great individuals are sometimes admired, envied, criticized, or misunderstood because their exceptional achievements attract attention.
8. **Focus on legacy rather than immediate rewards.** Gracián encourages readers to think beyond short-term success and consider how their actions will be remembered. Character and contribution ultimately matter more than temporary advantage.



Questions

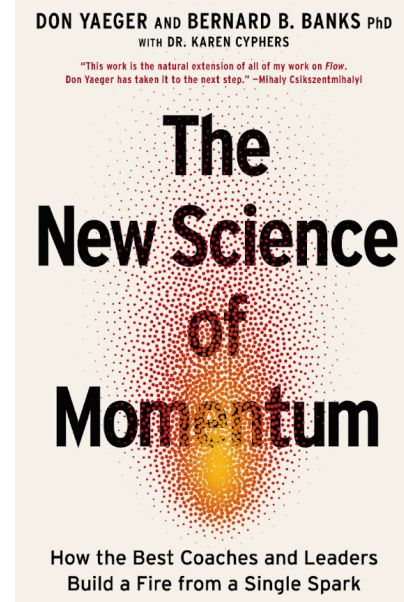
1. Am I pursuing success, or significance?
2. What reputation am I building through my daily actions?
3. How would colleagues describe my leadership after I leave?
4. What contribution will outlast my position?

Don Yaeger and Bernie Banks explain that outcomes and feedback are the final elements in the momentum cycle, but they also become the starting point for future momentum. Successes and failures provide teams with information they use to adjust, learn, and improve. Momentum is strengthened when leaders intentionally interpret results and create effective feedback loops.

Key Outcomes and Feedback

1. **Results matter because they validate effort.** Positive outcomes reinforce the belief that the team's actions are working.
2. **Feedback fuels future performance.** Teams gain momentum when they learn from outcomes rather than merely celebrating or lamenting them.
3. **Small wins create confidence.** Incremental successes provide evidence that progress is being made and encourage continued effort.
4. **Success should be examined, not assumed.** Effective leaders ask why something worked so it can be repeated.
5. Failures provide valuable information. Setbacks can strengthen future momentum when treated as learning opportunities.
6. **Timely feedback is essential.** The closer the feedback is to the action, the more useful it is for improving performance.
7. **Leaders shape how outcomes are interpreted.** The meaning attached to a result often matters as much as the result itself.
8. **Data and observation should guide decisions.** Teams should use evidence rather than assumptions when evaluating performance.
9. **Recognition reinforces desired behaviors.** Acknowledging contributions encourages team members to repeat successful actions.
10. **Momentum requires continuous adjustment.** High-performing teams constantly refine their approach based on feedback.
11. **Feedback strengthens belief and mindset.** Constructive feedback helps individuals and teams maintain confidence while improving.
12. **The cycle never ends.** Outcomes generate feedback, feedback influences future actions, and those actions create new outcomes, sustaining momentum over time.

Great leaders do not simply focus on achieving results. They create a culture in which every outcome—whether positive or negative—is used as feedback that strengthens learning, reinforces confidence, and generates the next wave of momentum. When teams consistently learn from outcomes, momentum becomes self-sustaining rather than accidental.



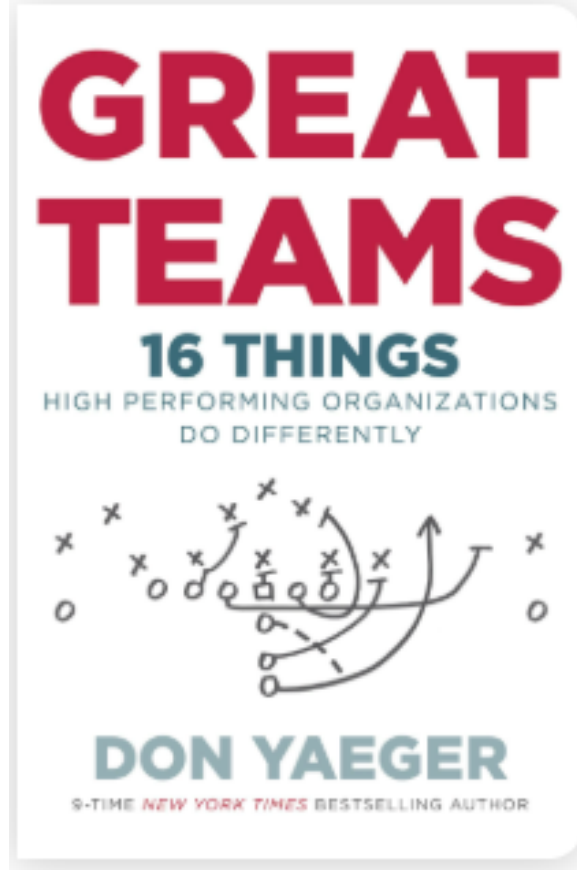
Mutual Direction: Pillar Four,
From Great Teams: 16 Things High-Performing Organizations Do Differently

Pillar Four, Mutual Direction, focuses on how great teams maintain alignment, trust, and collective focus so everyone moves toward the same goals. Yaeger identifies four key characteristics of teams that excel in this area: they improve through scouting, see value others miss, win in critical situations, and avoid the pitfalls of success.

1. **Great teams are united by shared responsibility:** (a) Members understand that success belongs to the entire team, not just individual stars, and (b) Trust and accountability create a common sense of direction and purpose.
2. **Great teams continuously scout and learn.** (a) They study competitors, trends, and their own performance, and (b) They are constantly gathering information to improve rather than assuming past success guarantees future success.
3. **Great teams look for opportunities others overlook:** (a) They challenge conventional thinking, and (b) They use data, observation, and creativity to uncover hidden advantages and innovative solutions.
4. **Great teams prepare for critical moments:** (a) Success often depends on performance during high-pressure situations, and (b) Effective teams practice, prepare, and build confidence so they can execute when the stakes are highest.
5. **Communication creates alignment:** (a) Great teams develop a common language and shared understanding, and (b) The way members communicate reinforces culture, expectations, and commitment to team goals.
6. **They focus on collective success rather than individual recognition:** (a) Team members place organizational goals ahead of personal agendas, (b) Shared direction reduces internal competition and increases collaboration.
7. **Great teams remain humble despite success:** (a) They avoid complacency, arrogance, and entitlement, (b) Humility keeps the team learning, adapting, and improving.
8. **Mutual direction sustains long-term excellence:** (a) The strongest teams continuously align around mission, values, and goals, and (b) This shared direction enables them to endure leadership changes, adversity, and shifting circumstances while maintaining high performance.

A team with strong mutual direction would:

- Have a clearly understood strategic plan.



- Align board, superintendent, principals, and staff around common priorities.
- Use data and community feedback to improve.
- Learn from other high-performing districts.
- Maintain focus on student success rather than individual agendas.
- Celebrate accomplishments while remaining committed to continuous improvement.

Mutual direction is what transforms a collection of talented individuals into a true team. Great organizations continuously learn, communicate clearly, stay humble, and maintain a shared commitment to a common purpose, even as challenges and circumstances change.

ChatGPT and AI

Here's How AI Is Driving the Real Revolution in Higher Education by Onur Bakiner on the Seattle Times site.



AI's greatest impact on higher education is not technological but educational: it is pushing colleges to focus less on routine knowledge production and more on developing the judgment, ethics, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills that remain distinctly human.

1. **AI is transforming higher education, but not by replacing professors.** The deeper revolution is forcing colleges and universities to rethink what students should learn and how learning should be assessed.
2. **Human skills become more valuable as AI becomes more capable.** Critical thinking, judgment, discernment, ethical reasoning, and creativity are emerging as the skills that distinguish human outputs from AI-generated ones.
3. **Traditional assignments must evolve.** AI tools can perform many routine writing and information-gathering tasks, requiring faculty to redesign coursework to emphasize analysis, problem-solving, and original thinking.
4. **AI literacy is becoming essential for all students.** Understanding how to use AI responsibly and effectively is no longer limited to computer science; it is increasingly important across disciplines and careers.
5. **The liberal arts gain new relevance in the AI era.** Rather than becoming obsolete, broad-based education that develops communication skills, ethical judgment, and interdisciplinary thinking becomes more important as automation expands.
6. **Education is about more than information transfer.** Universities play a crucial role in mentoring students, fostering relationships, building character, and helping students develop as whole persons—functions that AI cannot fully replicate.

7. The future is human-AI collaboration, not human replacement.

Colleges should prepare students to work effectively with AI while strengthening uniquely human capacities that guide, evaluate, and improve what AI produces.

AI Assistance Reduces Persistence and Hurts Independent Performance

by Grace Liu, Brian Christian, Tsvetomira Dumbalska, Michiel A. Bakker, and Rachit Dubey.

The researchers do not argue that AI is inherently harmful. Instead, they suggest that how AI is used matters greatly. **Using AI as a**

tutor, coach, or source of hints may support learning, while using it as an answer machine can reduce persistence, weaken independent thinking, and impair long-term skill development.



1. **AI improves short-term performance but weakens independent performance.** Across multiple randomized controlled experiments involving 1,222 participants, people using AI performed better when assistance was available but significantly worse when the AI was removed.
2. **AI assistance reduces persistence.** Participants who used AI were more likely to give up on difficult problems when they later had to work independently. Persistence—a key ingredient of learning and skill development—declined after AI-assisted problem solving.
3. **The effects appeared surprisingly quickly.** The researchers found measurable declines in persistence and independent performance after only about 10 minutes of AI-assisted work, suggesting that the impact can occur rapidly.
4. **The problem was strongest when users asked AI for direct answers.** Participants who relied on AI to solve problems for them showed the largest declines. Those who used AI for hints, clarification, or guidance experienced much smaller negative effects.
5. **The findings generalized across different tasks.** The negative effects were observed in both mathematical reasoning and reading-comprehension tasks, suggesting the phenomenon is not limited to a single subject area.
6. **Current AI systems are optimized for immediate help, not long-term learning.** The authors argue that today's AI tools act as "short-sighted collaborators" that prioritize instant solutions rather than helping users build competence, resilience, and problem-solving skills over time.
7. **Future AI should focus on scaffolding rather than replacing thinking.** The study concludes that AI systems should be designed to support learning, encourage productive struggle, and develop human capability instead of simply delivering answers.

The ChatGPT Study Everyone Shared Was Retracted on the

The AI School Librarian site.

The retracted ChatGPT study is a reminder that educators and librarians must apply the same information-literacy standards to AI research that they teach to students. In a rapidly evolving

field, the most important skill is not deciding whether AI is "good" or "bad," but learning how to critically evaluate claims, evidence, and research quality before acting on them.



1. **A highly influential ChatGPT-in-education study was officially retracted.** The paper had been widely cited as evidence that ChatGPT improves student learning outcomes and was frequently referenced in educational discussions, presentations, and policy conversations. The journal later retracted it due to significant concerns about discrepancies in its meta-analysis.
2. **The bigger issue is not one flawed study but the speed of AI hype.** The author argues that educational conversations about AI often move faster than the research can be properly vetted. Studies can become accepted "truth" before sufficient scrutiny has occurred.
3. **Even information-literacy experts can be caught up in amplification.** The author reflects on the uncomfortable possibility of having shared or referenced the study, despite teaching source evaluation and critical thinking. This illustrates how easily credibility and popularity can substitute for verification.
4. **Educators should be cautious about making decisions based on early AI research.** Schools are increasingly being asked to develop policies and practices around AI, yet the evidence base remains immature and evolving. A single study—even a highly cited one—should not drive major educational decisions.
5. **Information literacy is more important than ever.** The retraction highlights the need to evaluate sources, examine methodologies, question conclusions, and verify claims before accepting them. These are the same skills educators seek to teach students.
6. **AI research should be viewed as an ongoing conversation, not a settled fact.** The author encourages educators to pay attention to the quality of evidence, the replication of findings, and scholarly debate rather than relying on headlines or social media summaries of research.
7. **The lesson is not that AI is ineffective, but that critical evaluation matters.** The retraction does not prove that AI has no educational value. Instead, it demonstrates the importance of skepticism, evidence-based decision-making, and resisting the temptation to embrace or reject AI based on a single study.

Benefits and Consequences of AI-ChatGPT

Benefits of Students Using ChatGPT	Potential Consequences of Students Using ChatGPT
1. Immediate Access to Information Students can quickly obtain explanations, definitions, examples, and background information on a wide range of topics.	1. Reduced Persistence Students may be more likely to give up on difficult tasks instead of working through challenges independently.
2. Personalized Learning Support ChatGPT can adapt explanations to different learning levels and learning styles.	2. Weaker Independent Problem-Solving Skills Overreliance on AI can reduce opportunities to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills.
3. Improved Writing Assistance Students can receive help with brainstorming, outlining, editing, and improving clarity.	3. Academic Integrity Concerns Students may submit AI-generated work as their own, creating plagiarism and authorship issues.
4. Increased Study Efficiency AI can summarize readings, create study guides, generate practice questions, and support exam preparation.	4. Inaccurate or Misleading Information ChatGPT can produce errors, "hallucinations," or outdated information that students may mistakenly trust.
5. Enhanced Accessibility Students with learning differences, language barriers, or disabilities can receive additional support and scaffolding.	5. Reduced Learning Retention If AI performs too much of the cognitive work, students may retain less knowledge and understanding.
6. Encouragement of Curiosity and Exploration Students can ask follow-up questions without fear of judgment and explore topics in greater depth.	6. Diminished Creativity and Original Thinking Students may become dependent on AI-generated ideas rather than developing their own perspectives.
7. Preparation for an AI-Driven Workforce Learning to use AI responsibly is becoming an important career skill across many professions.	7. Overdependence on Technology Students may struggle when AI tools are unavailable, especially on assessments or in situations requiring independent work.

Governing Generative Artificial Intelligence: Institutional Policies and Guidelines at America's Flagship Universities

by Jason LaFrance on the Educational Policy site.



1. **Universities are rapidly developing AI governance systems.** The study examined publicly available generative AI policies from America's flagship public universities and found that institutions are moving from ad hoc responses toward more formal governance structures.
2. **Most universities use a distributed governance model.** Rather than imposing a single campus-wide rule, universities generally delegate instructional decisions about AI use to faculty and individual courses while providing institution-level guidance and guardrails.
3. **Faculty are given significant discretion.** Instructors often determine whether AI is: (a) Prohibited, (b) Restricted, (c) Permitted with disclosure, or (d) Fully integrated into learning activities. This reflects long-standing traditions of academic freedom and shared governance.
4. **Institutional policies focus heavily on risk management.** University-level guidance concentrates on: (a) Data privacy, (b) Security, (c) Approved AI tools, (d) Legal compliance, and (e) Ethical concerns. Administrative policies tend to be more centralized than instructional policies.
5. **Despite differences, universities are converging on common approaches.** Institutions vary in how detailed or restrictive their policies are, but many are arriving at similar governance structures that balance innovation, academic freedom, and institutional oversight.
6. **AI governance is reinforcing existing organizational structures.** Rather than transforming how universities make decisions, AI policies largely follow established patterns of authority and responsibility already present in higher education governance.
7. **The challenge is balancing innovation and control.** Universities are attempting to encourage productive AI use while simultaneously addressing concerns about: (a) Academic integrity, (b) Bias, (c) Privacy, (d) Accuracy, and (e) Overreliance on AI tools.
8. **AI literacy is becoming a governance issue.** The study suggests that effective AI governance requires more than policies. Faculty, staff, and students need sufficient AI knowledge to make informed decisions and use these tools responsibly.

Implications for K–12 School Districts

The findings offer several lessons for superintendents:

1. Avoid a single district-wide rule for every classroom

Just as universities are doing, districts may benefit from establishing district guardrails while allowing teachers and principals flexibility in implementation.

2. Focus on governance before enforcement

Questions of: (a) Privacy, (b) Security, (c) Data protection, and (d) Approved tools should be addressed before debating student use.

3. Develop AI literacy before writing extensive policies

Policies are only effective if staff understand: (a) What AI can do (b) What AI cannot do, and (c) Appropriate educational uses

4. Balance innovation with risk management

The most successful institutions appear to be neither banning AI nor embracing it uncritically.

5. Expect policies to evolve

Universities are treating AI governance as an ongoing process rather than a one-time policy decision.

America's leading universities are not responding to AI through blanket prohibitions or unrestricted adoption. **Instead, they are creating a framework of institutional guardrails while giving faculty substantial discretion.** The lesson for school districts is that effective AI governance may depend less on rigid rules and more on building AI literacy, establishing clear principles, and allowing informed professional judgment within a shared framework.

Sayings That Are Scary, But Absolutely True

1. You are what you do, not what you promise you'll do.
2. No one will realize your value until your absence is felt.
3. Don't fight for someone to love you; fight for someone who already does.
4. Never think that a person of peace is not skilled at war.
5. Just a minute of anger, lust, or greed can destroy a lifetime of hard work.
6. Any lesson you refuse to learn will keep coming back until you face it.
7. The longer you stay on the wrong train, the more expensive it becomes to return home.
8. Ships that wait for the perfect wind will never set sail.
9. Fear will never stop death; it will only ruin what's left of your life.
10. You will never heal in the same environment that made you sick.
11. Nothing is worse than avoiding your full potential.
12. Real wealth is having no health problems.
13. Save every stone thrown at you; one day, you'll need them to build your own castle.
14. Nobody works harder than someone who hates asking for help.
15. Never be afraid to start again; a new beginning





Click on the name to access the interview.

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

"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**, New York

"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 May 11, 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
-

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 Furlis.

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



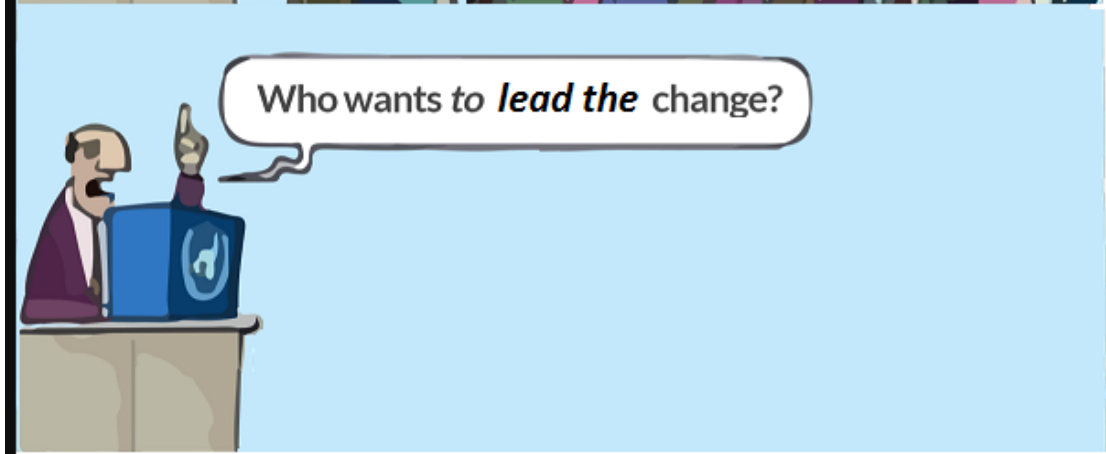
The Guide for Using AI - ChatGPT (Getting Started)

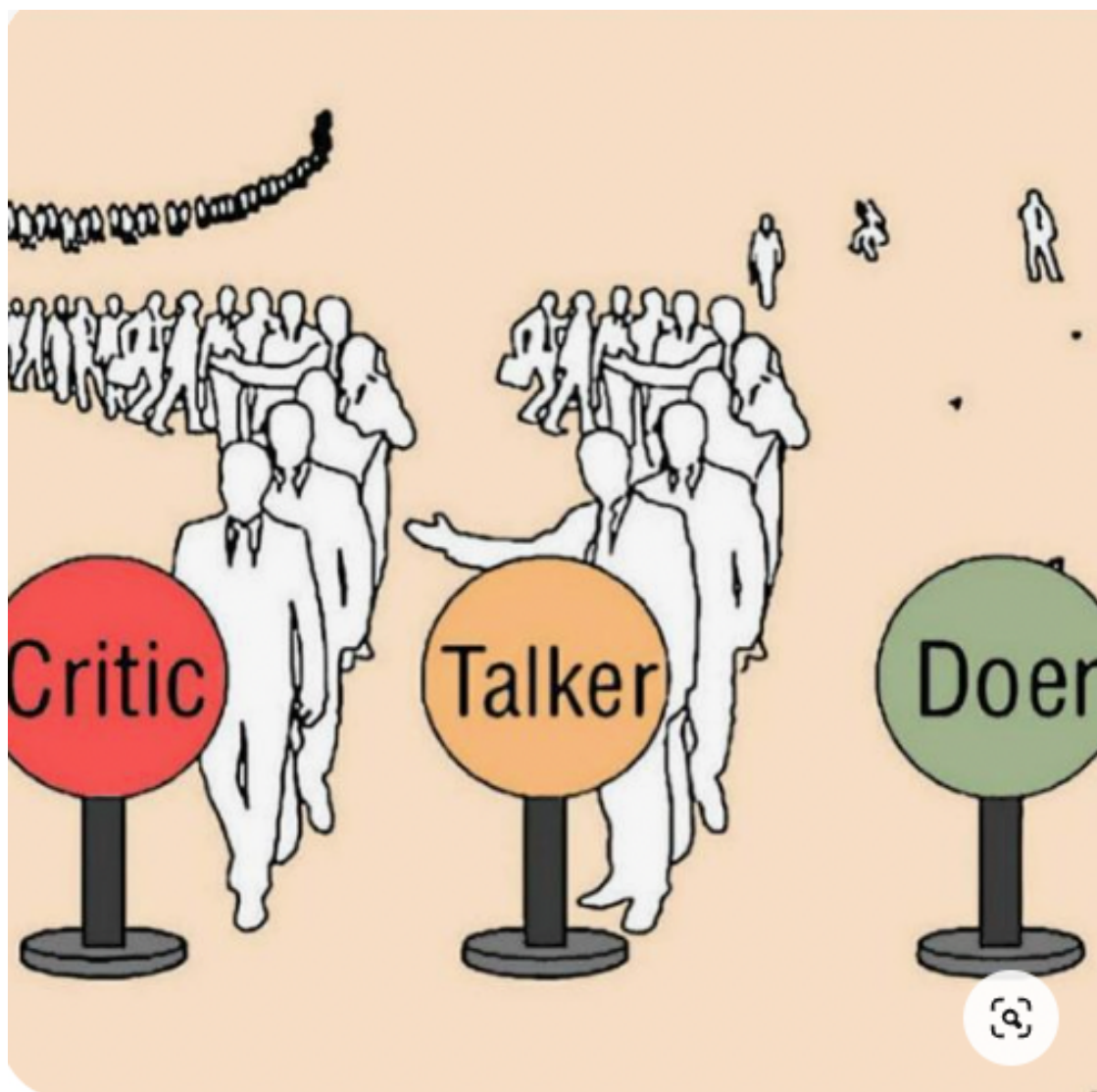
The Book of Wisdom (Good coffee - Great Friendships)

Cartoon for the Week

the SUMMER SLIDE...







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)

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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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