Horace Mann League of the USA
Founded in 1922 to Support Public Education

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An Honorary Association of Public Education Leaders

July 28, 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

"Leadership is a choice—not a position. It is a combination of skills rooted in authenticity, transparency, inspiration, and influence that produce results and strengthen organizations, teams, and the leaders who will follow us. Leadership is always about 'we,' never about 'me.'"



— Theresa R. Rouse, Supt., Illinois' Joliet Public Schools District 86; member, Horace Mann League Board of Directors

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HML News



Editor's Note: A Season to Recharge

As summer quietly reaches its midpoint, we hope you've found moments to step away from the pace of everyday life and enjoy the people and places that bring you peace. Whether you're spending time with family, reconnecting with friends, exploring your community, or simply enjoying a quiet afternoon, these moments have a way of restoring perspective.

It's also okay to unplug. The emails, text messages, and endless notifications will still be there tomorrow. Put the phone down. Close the laptop. Take a walk. Sit on the porch. Watch the sunset. Sometimes our greatest source of renewal isn't accomplishing one

more task—it's giving ourselves permission to be still. We hope the weeks ahead leave you feeling refreshed, inspired, and ready to lead with renewed energy and purpose in the new school year.

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

(Photography by James Minichello, Yakima, Wash.)

An Update About The Post



Beginning later this summer, *The Post* will transition to a biweekly publication schedule. This change will allow us to devote more time to developing original content, including member profiles, leadership conversations, interviews, and stories highlighting the outstanding work taking place in school districts and organizations across the country.

Our goal is simple: to make each edition of *The Post* even more timely, engaging, and valuable to our members. As always, we welcome your feedback and ideas as we continue to evolve the newsletter. If you have suggestions or thoughts you'd like to share, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Feature Stories



We Talk About Whole Children. What About Whole Educators?

by Nicol Russell for *EdSurge*

We treat early childhood teachers like babysitters instead of the engineers they are. If we want them to stay, we have to invest in the systems that sustain them.

Read More



CoSN's 2026 Driving K-12 Innovation Report - *EdTech Digest*

CoSN's newly released 2026 Driving K-12 Innovation Report offers a clear-eyed look at where education technology is headed-and what it will take to get there responsibly.

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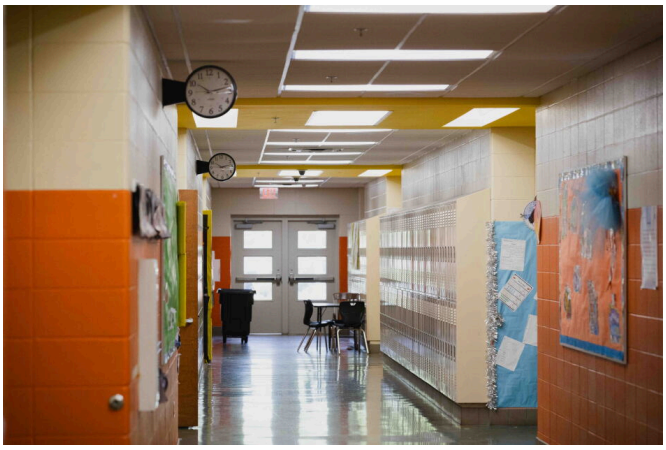
'A Game of Catch-Up': How This Oklahoma School Gets Kids Reading at Grade Level

by Lauren Wagner / *The 74*

Frederick Elementary's incoming 3rd graders practice 15 literacy skills in small groups for 45 minutes each day. By spring, most can read proficiently.

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Issues of the Week

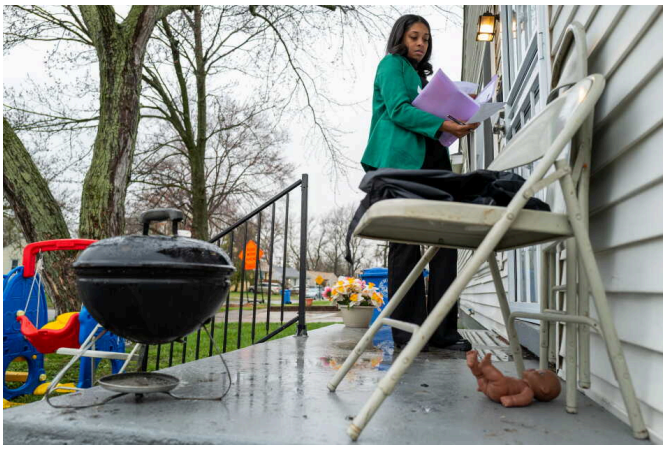


A New Tool Can Predict Absenteeism-Before It's Chronic

by Caitlynn Peetz Stephens / *Education Week*

A researcher-made tool takes student data into account to predict the risk of chronic absences.

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What Makes Some Schools Better at Building Attendance? There's No Silver Bullet

by Evie Blad / *Education Week*

"Deep" family engagement to boost attendance is promising, but schools must address the problem holistically.

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Budget shortfalls, declining enrollment top district leaders' concerns

by Anna Merod / *K-12 Dive*

Districts are looking to marketing campaigns and expanded pre-K services to bring in more students, according to a new Rand Corp. survey.

Read More



Here's what you need to know about key topics shaping K-12

by Roger Ridell / *K-12 Dive*

We've gathered past installments of our explainer series in one place to help you stay on top of the must-know information on key topics.

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Leadership Ideas



The CFO's guide to building a personal brand

by Adam Zaki / *CFO.com*

Branding experts share how finance leaders can build executive presence to stand out on LinkedIn and within the C-suite.

Read More

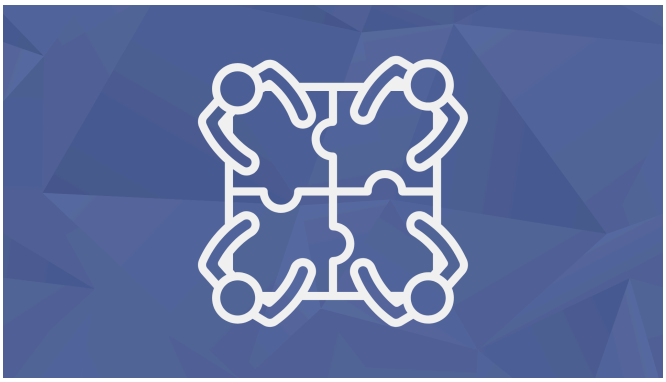


Why Bill Gates Scheduled Time to Do Nothing but Think

by Moshe Engelberg for *Inc.com*

Your calendar becomes an advantage when you intentionally protect time for deep thinking instead of filling every moment with activity.

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8 Strategies for Leading Teams Engaged Through Uncertainty - *Lindauer*

Uncertainty isn't going away. But disengagement doesn't have to be the default.

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AI



5 Questions to Ask When Choosing EdTech Solutions

by Madeleine Mortimore for *EdTech Magazine*

Technology can accelerate learning when chosen with care, but it can also become a distraction if it doesn’t meet the everyday needs of students and educators.

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What Does AI Cost When We Skip the Work? - *EdSurge*

EdSurge examines what still holds up when artificial intelligence moves fast, through two guests who are both defending something slow against something fast.

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HML Wants to Hear From You

Share Your Story With the League



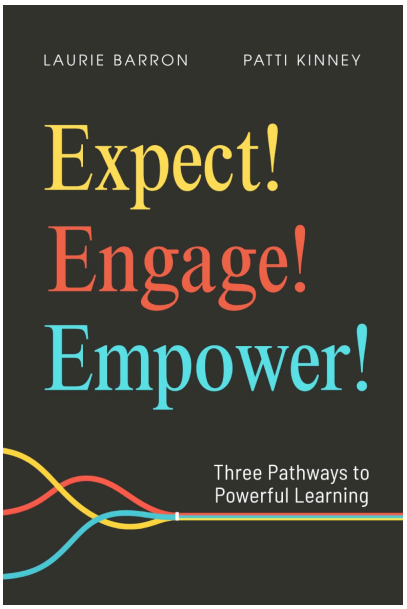
One of the greatest strengths of the Horace Mann League is the remarkable work our members do every day on behalf of students, schools, and communities.

As we continue planning upcoming editions of The Post, we encourage 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. We look forward to hearing from you.

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



Expect! Engage! Empower! shows how to unlock that potential using three interconnected pathways that lead to powerful learning. Through the pathways of Expect, Engage, and Empower, authors Laurie Barron and Patti Kinney invite educators to create classrooms where every learner thrives:

Expect highlights the power of teacher beliefs. What teachers expect shapes how students perform, behave, and see themselves. When expectations are high and support is tailored, students rise to meet the challenge of thinking critically, applying learning, and growing in confidence.

Engage is all about bringing learning to life. True engagement means students are thinking, feeling, and actively involved, not just going through the motions. When lessons are meaningful and challenging, motivation and collaboration grow. Boredom fades when students see the relevance of what they're learning.

Spotlight Conversations



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

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 Fourlis
Andi Fourlis 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 Gandea

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Critical Race Theory and School Board Meetings
with Bryan Brayboy, Adrienne Dixson, and Daniel G. Solorzano.

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

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

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

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

Notable Books and Reports for Members



Click on the title to download.
Long-Range Planning - (Strategic Plans: Benefits and Consequences)

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

The Guide for Using AI - ChatGPT (Getting Started)

The Book of Wisdom (Good coffee - Great Friendships)

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)

HORACE MANN LEAGUE
Supporting Public Schools

Address:
HML
James Minichello, Exec. Dir.
400 Cameron Station #121
Alexandria, vA 22304

Get In Touch

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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
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1987 Patrick Hoban WA
1986 M Donald Thomas UT
1985 Anne Campbell NE
1984 Floyd W. Parsons AR
1983 Paul Shelly NJ
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1981 Albert Ayers VA
1980 Ken HansenCO

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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