

# NEWSLETTER

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*“Better Schools for Maine Students”*

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## President’s Message



Another summer has passed by quickly and I hope all of you took time to rest and enjoy the company of family and friends. It is always exciting to start a new year whether you have been the leader in the same district for 20 years or if you are starting a new position. We all have the same mission of meeting the needs of the students we serve. It seems our students

come to us needier than ever before which should motivate us to work harder than ever before to provide the services our students need to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We all know that an education is a powerful asset that changes lives. As the top leaders in our districts I am confident we will all vow to do everything we can to better the lives of all students in the State of Maine.

The Superintendency can be a very rewarding position, but it can also be a highly stressful occupation that can completely consume every part of your life. I recommend that each one of you take a little time for yourself and as much time as possible for your family. I know we all have meetings we must attend and things we have to accomplish but at the end of our time on earth I bet we will wish we had spent more time with our family and less time on the job. One of the most important challenges for administrators is to figure out what you must do and what you can delegate. Make sure you hire highly motivated and trustworthy people in your central office and school buildings. I think we all know we are really only as good as the staff we hire, because we can’t do the job alone.

As we look forward to the 2019/2020 school year I am thankful that our Governor and Commissioner are very supportive of Superintendents and education in general. I have found it a pleasure to work with Commissioner Makin on several issues and I look forward to representing our organization as we meet with the Commissioner and other governmental officials. As all of you know, the Maine School Superintendents Association works for all of us and some of the most important work they do is building strong relationships with the Executive and Legislative branches of government, as well as, the Department of Education. MSMA/MSSA also provides a number of services including board training, leadership development, consultation and customer services, which includes helping you develop high quality, consistent and up-to-date policies. MSSA Executive Director, Eileen King, stands ready to work with you this year. Eileen was a Superintendent for many years and will either help you directly or point you

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## MSSA Annual Meeting October 24



We invite you to attend the MSSA Annual Meeting of the Maine School Superintendents Association to be held in the **Augusta/Capitol/Pine Tree Rooms** at the Augusta Civic Center on Wednesday, October 23, 2019. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., and the program will start at 9:00 a.m.

The Professional Development Committee is pleased to announce that Joe Sanfelippo will be joining us for our Annual meeting.

Dr. Joe Sanfelippo is the Superintendent of the Fall Creek School District in Fall Creek, WI. The Fall Creek School District was named an Innovative District in 2016 and 2017 by the International Center for Leadership in Education. He holds a BA in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, an MS in Educational Psychology, an MS in Educational Leadership, and a Ph.D. in Leadership, Learning, and Service. Joe has taught Kindergarten, 2nd Grade, and 5th Grade. He has served as a principal in suburban and rural Wisconsin. Joe co-authored *The Power of Branding: Telling Your School’s Story*, *Principal Professional Development: Leading Learning in a Digital Age*, and *Hacking Leadership: 10 Ways Great Leaders Inspire Learning That Teachers, Students, and Parents Love*. He was selected as one of “117 Future Ready Superintendents” in 2014 and one of 50 Superintendents as a Personalized Learning Leader in 2016 by the US Department of Education. He was named one of five “K-12 Administrators to watch” in 2018 by *Education Dive*.

## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Conference “It Starts With Us”



The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual MSMA Fall Conference is celebrating the incredible work schools do every day with the theme of “It Starts With Us.” With an incredible lineup of clinics and speakers, and opportunities for those attending to share and learn from one another, this professional learning opportunity promises to be a “don’t want to miss” event.

Donna Beegle

The conference is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, Oct. 24 and 25, at the Augusta Civic Center, with registration available through the superintendent’s office.

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## The Time is Now to Meet with Legislators

Now that school has started and legislators are home from Augusta, it is an ideal time to invite your House members and Senators to a Regional Superintendents Meeting. You can ask them what they would like to accomplish in the next legislative session beginning in January and offer to serve as a resource to explain how education-related bills will affect their district.

Find your [Senator](#). Find your [House member](#).

### 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Conference

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Thursday's keynote speaker Dr. Donna M. Beegle grew up in generational migrant-labor poverty and left school at 15 to get married and start a family. At 25, she found herself with two children, no husband, little education, and few marketable job skills. Within 10 short years, she got her GED and advanced through to a doctoral degree in educational leadership. All these experiences provide Dr. Beegle with an authentic voice with which to speak, write, and train across the nation to break the iron cage of poverty.

As president of Communication Across Barriers, a consulting firm dedicated to building poverty-informed communities that are armed with tools to break barriers, she works directly with children and adults currently in poverty, as well as professionals who want to make a difference for those living in poverty. Dr. Beegle is also the founder of the Opportunity Community movement, which provides the foundation for a contemporary war on poverty.

Dr. Beegle will share her unique insights from having grown up in generational poverty in America and of studying poverty for more than 20 years to help you enhance your knowledge of poverty and develop the understanding to impact the individuals with whom you work.



Peter Vigue

Friday's endnote speaker Peter Vigue joined Cianbro in 1970 in an entry level position after serving in the merchant marines. Since then, his experiences in project management and senior company management have transformed him and Cianbro into pioneers within the construction industry.

Peter's strong commitment to workplace safety and the education of his employees, led him to rally behind the idea that safety and education should become the impetus of Cianbro's total quality management plan. Peter's vision later included the health of team members as he believes a healthy company is the result of healthy team members. Today Peter champions the Cianbro Wellness Program, with the goal of improving quality of life and reducing at risk health behavior. As a result of Peter's leadership, Cianbro is recognized nationally for its safety and wellness programs and has been awarded the 2004 American College of Medicine's Corporate Health Achievement Award as the "Healthiest and Safest Company in America as well as the Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA) Platinum Level of Achievement Award.

Participants will learn about leadership traits thru lessons learned that propelled Cianbro to one of Maine's top companies.

## Good Reads

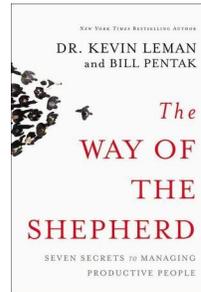
### [The Way of the Shepherd](#)

#### Seven Secrets to Managing Productive People

By Kevin Leman, William Pentak



A review from *Common Sense Leaders*:



I learned early on in my leadership development, by both example and experience, that it is important to take care of people. Eventually, this became one the core attributes of my leadership philosophy and practice. However, I experienced a time at one organization when it seemed like, by being very intentional about taking care of my specific employee group, I was fighting an uphill battle of resistance among much of my surrounding leadership team. It felt

like whenever I tried to identify and implement something that would allow my employees to feel taken care of, my peers within leadership tried to derail rather than support me.

It was during that time that I came across the book, [The Way of the Shepherd](#), by Kevin Leman and William Pentak. This particular book was a wonderful encouragement to me in reinforcing my belief in the importance of taking care of people (especially when my encouragement at that time was not coming from the people around me). I resonated with the principles and ideas within, so much so that I have since used the book again in other places as a leadership study.

The book draws lessons on leadership from an illustration of a modern shepherd and his sheep. In the process, management principles are presented that focus on character, priorities, and caring, aimed at engaging your employees and developing yourself. Using the shepherd/sheep analogy, Leman and Pentak expound on these 7 principles:

- Know the condition of your flock – know your people, engage your people, and care about your people
- Discover the shape of your sheep – choose and use people that fit, according to their strengths
- Help your sheep identify with you – communicate authenticity and a shared vision
- Make your pasture a safe place – build security and significance, and address issues
- Use the staff of direction – provide direction, empower people, and help them grow
- Use the rod of correction – protect, correct, and inspect
- Develop the heart of a shepherd – live a genuine example of caring leadership

It's a fairly short book, easy to read, but I found it to be a great resource and encouragement in my leadership. The principles make sense and are very applicable for effective leadership. This is definitely a book for your shelf if you are trying to make a difference in your people.

-Jeffrey S. McMaster, Ph.D., *Common Sense Leaders*

# What Makes Social-Emotional Learning So Important?

Four measures that can contribute to developmentally healthy schools

By Linda Darling-Hammond

While educators intrinsically know how important social and emotional well-being is to the welfare of our young people, it is sometimes hard to keep this reality in focus as we deal with the press for school accountability and ever higher standards.

Yet students respond powerfully to being cared about, well known, appreciated and seen for their assets rather than their deficits. When students are motivated and feel a sense of belonging, their learning improves. As the old saying goes, “Students often learn as much *for* a teacher as they learn *from* a teacher.”

This was apparent to me from the day I first student taught in the under-resourced summer school at Camden High School in New Jersey, where students who had failed English class the year before dreaded receiving remediation. But these students responded eagerly to opportunities to create poetry and life narratives that revealed their strengths — and were willing to learn grammar, revise their work and sharpen writing skills in the cause of being better understood.

It is why I have championed bringing social and emotional skills into both schools and the teacher education programs where I have worked and why I am co-chairing the National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development. The commission has convened educators, governors, business people and community leaders to develop an agenda for the nation — one that can leverage the policies and supports needed to bring this important work to every school and district in the nation.

Social and emotional supports for students in school have frequently been called the “missing link” in education. Decades of research confirm that students’ social, emotional, cognitive and academic development are deeply intertwined and vital for student learning. When we help students to engage productively with one another, understand themselves and how they think, and better handle the stresses and challenges in their lives, we prepare them for success now and in the future.

## Robust Benefits

Well-implemented programs designed to foster social, emotional and academic development are associated with positive outcomes, ranging from better test scores and higher graduation rates to improved social behavior. Researchers who reviewed 213 programs focused on social, emotional and academic learning found these programs positively affected students’ social competence and behavior. In addition, students experienced, on average, an 11 percentile-point improvement in academic performance. Subsequent studies have found long-term positive effects on academic effort and achievement, as measured in reading, writing and math scores, as well as graduation rates.

School safety, which is a top priority for parents and educators in the wake of school shootings in Parkland, Fla., and Santa Fe, Texas, is also enhanced by teaching students social and emotional skills and by creating a positive learning environment, including counseling and mental health supports.

When schools put in place an educative and restorative approach to discipline and teach students social and emotional skills, such as how to resolve conflicts and relate well to others, evidence shows that incident rates plummet and schools become safer. This is far preferable to a focus on exclusionary and punitive discipline practices that disrupt students’ academic progress and cause students to become more disconnected, alienated and angry. Just adding metal detectors and security guards is much less effective than teaching students tools they can use to manage their emotions and seek help when needed, as well as to raise and resolve problems.

I have seen this in my own work with high schools over many years. Among the most profound changes were those in a high school in East Palo Alto, Calif., I worked with for many years. Once dubbed the “murder capital” of the U.S., this high-poverty, largely immigrant community experiences significant gang violence, drive-by shootings and drug trafficking. Many of the students also suffer the traumas associated with evictions, homelessness, family incarceration, food insecurity and lack of health care.

When the school first opened with the intention of reducing high school dropout rates for students from the community, there were frequent fights, graffiti and chronic absenteeism. Many students did not engage in school work and were unmoved by threats of failure. They knew how to fail and expected it.

The turnaround occurred as their advisers — who saw a small group of students every day and stayed with them for all four years of high school — made home visits and positive phone calls to parents; created a close-knit community in advisory, as teachers did in classrooms; taught social-emotional awareness and skills, including conflict resolution; involved students in decision making about norms and responsibilities; developed restorative discipline practices and mental health supports; introduced mindfulness; and engaged students in project-based learning and internships focused on improving conditions in the community. Soon, the school became a safe haven with a strong family ethos — with students helping each other keep the campus safe while practicing social and emotional skills. Attendance rates soared and both graduation and college-going rates reached 90 percent.

The school, like so many others, demonstrated that the social and emotional aspects of learning are much more than a frill or an add-on. They are part of the core curriculum.

## Four Dimensions

For this to happen, school leaders need to pay attention to four things: (1) intentionally designing learning environments that are developmentally healthy places with strong long-term relationships; (2) directly teaching social and emotional learning strategies attuned to meet the needs of students in diverse socioeconomic, racial and ethnic contexts, and designing academic learning to engage these skills; (3) paying attention to the social and emotional learning needs of teachers and school leaders, as well as students; and (4) making it an explicit mission to prepare students to be personally and socially aware, skilled and responsible.

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## **Social-Emotional Learning**

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### **Designing healthy learning environments**

A positive classroom and school environment is important for students to develop in healthy ways. When schools become a welcoming place for students from a diversity of backgrounds and with a diversity of ideas, and a supportive environment for those who struggle and have gone through trauma, students and teachers feel a sense of trust and belonging that supports effective learning.

A recent study from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research found that principals influence school achievement primarily through changes in the school climate. Strong learning climates are defined as safe, supportive environments with high, consistent and clear expectations for students, both behaviorally and academically.

The study, based on data from hundreds of schools, found that other principal-led school initiatives associated with improving schools — such as teachers' professional development, program alignment and parent engagement — matter for student achievement to the extent they facilitate a strong school climate. Even among schools that start out with safe climates or high achievement, further improvements in school climate are associated with higher achievement gains.

Schools need to be places where strong relationships can form. Unfortunately, that's not easy to do in all settings. We still struggle to redesign the factory-model school that we inherited in the early 1900s, in which students are grouped by age and have different teachers every year and, in secondary schools, every class period, providing few opportunities for long-term attachments.

Some school districts are engaged in the hard work of redesigning schools to create smaller environments that are more personalized, where adults and students stay together over periods of time, where teams of teachers and administrators can work with each other around the needs of particular students and where advisory structures enable teachers to know students well.

Increasingly, schools also are reaching out to families and other community institutions that play an essential role in supporting young people's growth. Including families and out-of-school settings in efforts to ensure students' healthy development enables learning to occur across contexts.

### **Creating learning strategies that support social, emotional and academic development**

Social and emotional skills can be taught with high-quality practices, programs and interventions in both school and out-of-school settings. Indeed, some evidence suggests social and emotional learning skills are open to change over a long period of time, and some skills, such as learning to manage one's emotions, are building blocks for more complex skills that emerge as children age, such as learning to manage conflicts.

In addition to specific social and emotional learning programs, we need to consider curriculum designs and instructional practices that integrate social and emotional learning with academics. Engaging students in well-designed collaborative work around hard problems gives them a sense of ownership over their own learning. Allowing them to reflect on and revise their work in response to feedback helps them develop a growth mindset. Offering real-world, authentic projects helps them develop executive functioning, resourcefulness and the skills of learning to learn, preparing them for work in the 21st century.

If we think about the ways in which we have to be able to function as adults, we work in groups on problems that need creative solutions and require problem solving. Preparing students to do that work well is part of the major goal of education in the modern era.

### **Supporting the adults who work with children**

For social, emotional and academic development to thrive in schools, teachers and administrators themselves need to have emotional resources that allow them to be centered and practice self-care, as well as training and support to understand and model social and emotional skills, behaviors, knowledge and beliefs for students. We need not only to enable teachers to help students get along with one another and develop social and emotional skills, but we need also to support teachers and leaders as social-emotional learners themselves.

Education is a very intense kind of work. Educators must be able to relate well to a variety of students and other adults; manage relationships on an ongoing basis; remain calm in the face of emergencies; and be deliberate in situations that are unpredictable. District administrators who support such adult learning are vital.

### **Making it an explicit mission**

More than anything, district and school leaders can be spokespeople and advocates for supporting learning that honors the whole student and for making social, emotional and academic learning an explicit mission of schools. School leaders need to build this vision into what they do and how they talk about education and build it into their strategic plans.

The reward is both helping students be more successful in school and more prepared for the world they're going into, which requires the kind of learning that's enabled by social, emotional and cognitive capacities. As adults, we can model for young people what a world would look like in which we work together and are responsive to each other, understand each other and build the kind of community in the outside world that we want to build in our schools.

**LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND** is president and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute in Palo Alto, Calif., and the Charles E. Ducommun professor of education emeritus at Stanford University. Twitter: [@ldh\\_ed](https://twitter.com/ldh_ed)

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# Mark Your Calendar



EVENT	VENUE	DATE	
<b>The Dam Breaks: New Laws Flood Schools</b> Presented by Drummond Woodsum	Augusta Civic Center	9/13/19	<a href="#">More info</a>
<b>NEASS Annual Fall Conference</b> Student Voices, Student Choices and The Impact On The Superintendency	Sheraton Portsmouth Harborside Hotel	9/26-9/27/19	<a href="#">More info</a>
<b>New Supts/Asst Supts Meeting</b> Collective Bargaining	MSMA Augusta, ME	10/10/19	Save the Date
<b>MSSA Annual Meeting</b>	Augusta Civic Center	10/23/19	Save the Date
<b>Drive-In Board Chair Workshop</b>	Augusta Civic Center	10/23/19	Save the Date
<b>46<sup>th</sup> Annual MSMA Fall Conference</b>	Augusta Civic Center	10/24-10/25/19	Save the Date
<b>AASA National Conference on Education</b>	San Diego, CA	2/13-2/15/20	<a href="#">More info</a>

## President's Message

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in the right direction. Steve Bailey, our Maine School Management Association Executive Director also worked for many years as a Superintendent and is an excellent resource for our association members. Our jobs are complicated and unpredictable some days, so when you don't know where to turn, give our experts at MSMA a call.

As many of you are aware, there are a number of new laws in place that will impact education. We will need to know how these laws will affect our schools. Thankfully MSSA will provide professional development opportunities that will bring experts to the table to explain the implications of new legislation, as well as, professional development opportunities in many other areas of education. By all means, attend as many of our events as possible.

In closing, I look forward to serving as your MSSA President for the 2019/2020 school year. Please contact me any time if you have questions about MSSA or if you just need someone to chat with about a problem or for general advice. I can be reached at 255-6585, 263-4526 or by email at [super@aos96.org](mailto:super@aos96.org). Remember, take care of your schools, but also take care of yourself and your family.

Take care and have a great school year.

Scott K. Porter

## MSSA Mission Statement

### **Purpose:**

Maine School Superintendents Association:  
Leading for equity, excellence and opportunity for  
all Maine students.

### **Mission Statement:**

The Maine School Superintendents Association (MSSA) is an organization committed to leadership that:

- Provides equity, creates opportunities for and promotes the success of every student;
- Develops ethical, visionary and competent leaders;
- Promotes community and legislative support for education;
- Advocates for public education and School Superintendents.

### **Core Values and Beliefs:**

We believe members shall:

- Maintain high expectations for all students, staff and ourselves
- Advocate for resources essential to student learning
- Act with integrity and model professional behavior
- Champion the advancement of public education



If you have questions about any articles in this newsletter or suggestions for improving this publication, please let us know.

You can contact me, MSSA Executive Director Eileen King at [eking@msmaweb.com](mailto:eking@msmaweb.com).