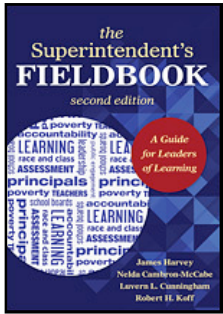


HERE AND THERE



The Superintendent's Fieldbook

The product of 20 years of work with more than 300 superintendents, the second edition of this bestseller provides hands-on advice along with the latest research on the superintendency. Much of it written by Roundtable superintendents, the *Fieldbook* can be ordered now:

<http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book237433?status=bestSeller&classification=%22Professional%20Books%22&ortBy=defaultPubDate%20desc&fs=1>

The new *Fieldbook* examines the implications for school leadership of Race to the Top, the Common Core, and ongoing efforts to privatize public schools, along with practical advice about improving instruction and learning, getting the first job, bargaining like a pro, working with your board, developing an entry plan, and preparing for and managing emergencies and crises.

A Broader, Bolder Agenda

On January 21, executive director James Harvey represented the Roundtable before the education committee of the Washington State Senate in support of more comprehensive school reform efforts such as the Broader, Bolder Agenda and ASCD's "whole child"

initiative. He repeated his testimony before the House of Representatives on February 5.

Video available at:
http://www.tvw.org/index.php?option=com_tvwplayer&eventID=2013020053

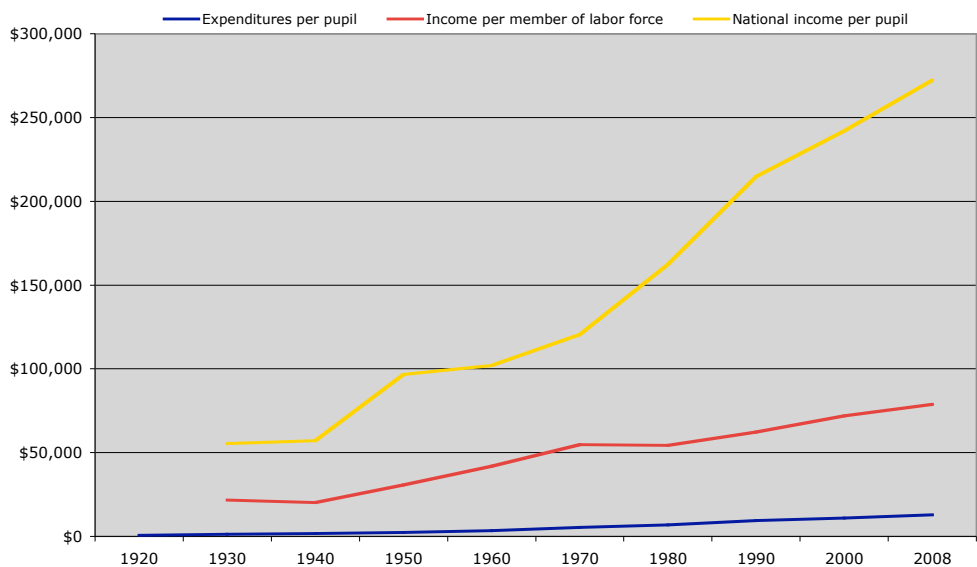
Calendar & Contact

July 12-14
Summer Meeting, Chicago, Illinois.
Implementing the Common Core

October 21-23, 2011
Fall Meeting, Washington, DC
Education in Europe

The Roundtable:
National Superintendents Roundtable
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Seattle, WA 98115
206-526-5336
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Per-Pupil Expenditures in Broader Context, 1920-2008



Source: Superintendent's Fieldbook, 2013 (from NCES data)

Roundtable News

Letter to President Barack Obama

Letter on gun violence to the President, Vice President, and members of Congress and the Cabinet.



National Superintendents Roundtable

January 10, 2013

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Steven Ladd, Superintendent, Elk Grove Unified School District, CA (Co-Chair)
Marianne Bartley, Superintendent, Lebanon, PA
Yvonne Curtis, Superintendent, Forest Grove, OR
James Harvey, National Superintendents Roundtable, Seattle, WA
Mark Freeman, Superintendent, Shaker Heights, OH
Morton Sherman, Superintendent, Alexandria, VA
Bernard Taylor, Superintendent, East Baton Rouge Parish Schools, LA
Advisors
Luxern Cunningham, Dean Emeritus, The Ohio State University, OH
Carol B. Ochoy, Bank Street College of Education, New York
Robert Koff, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
Nelda Cambron-McCabe, Miami University, OH
C. Kent McGuire, Dean, Southern Education Foundation, GA
Peter Nigroni, Senior Vice President, The College Board, New York

The Roundtable is a program of ProForum, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Like educators everywhere, members of the National Superintendents Roundtable, a learning community of nearly 100 school superintendents in 30 states, want to offer what solace we can to the suffering community of Newtown, Connecticut. Speaking for our membership as the Roundtable's Steering Committee, we also support your call for meaningful action to respond to the horrific incidence of fatal gun violence in the United States.

As educators, we have both a professional and a personal interest in this latest school shooting. While the children, teachers, parents, and the community of Newtown were victimized in this incident, educators everywhere were traumatized. We have an obligation to speak up. If, despite what seem to have been state-of-the-art security procedures at Sandy Hook Elementary, 20 six- and seven-year-olds could be murdered in a matter of minutes along with six adults and the gunman's suicide, something similar is possible in any school in the nation. At a more personal level, our friend and colleague, Janet Robinson, is superintendent of schools in Newtown, responsible, as you know, for helping heal this shattered community.

We agree with you that our nation is not doing enough to protect our children from gun violence. We see the effects of that failure far too frequently in our schools and on our streets. We applaud your insistence that the nation is not powerless in the face of this carnage. We support the broad outlines of what you suggested during the memorial service in Newtown -- a comprehensive approach involving law enforcement, school security, mental health professionals, and parents and educators. Our nation can do better. It must do better. It cannot stand by and watch this continued slaughter of the innocents.

Please know that we stand ready to assist you in any way we can as you begin the difficult work ahead. Like you, we find some consolation in the thought that God has called these children home. But the task of binding

TACKLING DROPOUTS VIA DATA IN ELK GROVE, CALIFORNIA

light dashboard of stop/warning/go,” reported Ladd. He thinks of it as “Facebook meets data.”

Mark Gross, CEO of School Loop, described a system that each day pushes 5 million emails showing a dashboard of stop/warning/go to every teacher, along with information on which ten students are trending downward and which ten are improving. “When I ask teachers about their greatest moments, none of them say to me, ‘When I examined the spreadsheet, I saw a pattern emerge,’” quipped Gross. “They talk about students who returned and said, ‘Your class made a big difference in my life.’”

More useful than data to teachers is a color-coded system of green, yellow, and red, which immediately tells the teacher who’s on track, who’s got some problems, and who’s in real trouble. The system, in effect, informs a professional learning community with all the data it needs to make decisions: grades, assessment results, behavioral evaluations, attendance records and the like

What Does the Superintendent See? Superintendents see a similar dashboard by school. Student performance is summed up for each school, which in turn is totaled to provide a picture of district performance.

It’s a new system, just being launched in Elk Grove in October and up and running for barely weeks in Washington, D.C. Shortly it will be serving 4,000 schools in 30 states. Gross is optimistic it can make a difference. “Code can change culture,” he insists. “If you start out to change culture, you’ve given yourself a horrific challenge. But if you start to change support systems, cultural change can be a by-product.”

Steven Ladd, Elk Grove United superintendent



Elk Grove superintendent Steven Ladd, co-chair of the Roundtable, worries about dropouts. In a district enrolling 66,000, dropouts are a significant challenge. Armed with a federal stimulus grant to improve graduation rates, Ladd went shopping for a partner who could provide “free early warning software to identify at-risk students.” At School Loop, Ladd found that partner. Elk Grove educators now have “granular data on each student. It provides a traffic

THE ADVENTURES OF TAXI DOG



See the green sheet behind the actor amazed at the behavior of the puppet before him? The sheet is among the technological secrets of “Taxi Dog,” an online program for children that follows a dog and his taxi driver owner around the streets of New York. All action scenes are shot in front of a green screen so that the streets and landscapes of Gotham can be superimposed on the green background. Brought to life at the Roundtable meeting, *The Adventures of Taxi Dog* encourages children to experience new things, see new places, make new friends, and help others via a clever synthesis of live puppetry and computer graphics. Technical director Amy Wright told the Roundtable that the program aims to foster three new “R’s”: relationships, reflection, and resilience. All action scenes are shot in front of a

Using a sequence of activities, children follow a SAFF program — Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit. Using storyboards and recording their own video, students go back and forth between the two until they get it “right.” These activities encourage planning, repetition to correct mistakes, and a sense of perseverance—all promoting students’ understanding of just how difficult it is to do just about anything really well.

The President (2)
January 10, 2013

up the nation's wounds remains for all of us. That task must begin with you and members of the United States Congress, and with governors and state legislators.

Most respectfully yours,

Gloria J. Davis
Superintendent
Decatur Public Schools
Decatur, Illinois

Steven M. Ladd
Superintendent
Elk Grove Unified School District
Elk Grove, California

Marianne Bartley
Superintendent
Lebanon Public Schools
Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Yvonne Curtis
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Forest Grove, Oregon

Mark Freeman
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National Superintendents Roundtable
Seattle, Washington

Morton Sherman
Superintendent
Alexandria City Public Schools
Alexandria, Virginia

Bernard Taylor, Jr.
Superintendent
East Baton Rouge Parish Schools
East Baton Rouge, Louisiana

c.c.: The Vice President; Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives; Cabinet secretaries; and Governors of the states and territories

TECHNOLOGY: ABOUT CULTURE, NOT EQUIPMENT

Harking back to a message first heard by the Roundtable in 2009 from Anthony Salcito, Microsoft's global vice president for education, Stephanie Hamilton from the Apple Corporation insisted that technology has to be about changing school culture, not equipment. Hamilton is Apple's senior manager for learning technologies. Technology is ubiquitous and mobile, she noted, anticipating that by 2020 there will be 10 billion mobile platforms worldwide.

Insights from Apple. Children today are already more comfortable with these platforms than many adults, she smiled. To children, they represent a natural way of learning. "It's only technology if it was invented after you were born. For children, it's just always been there."

Business models in schools are not helpful. They tend to be revenue driven, focused on productivity, and network-centric. In schools, what is required, she said, is technology that is learning driven, focused on classrooms, and user-centric. "The big takeaways from our experience are these: Centrally controlled school technology cannot work; it has to be teacher-controlled. It should serve learning, not dictate curriculum. And bandwidth needs to be driven into classrooms, not into the central office."

The sense at Apple, she reported, is that students want the following from schools, in ascending order of importance: Work with interactive technologies. Teachers who serve as mentors. Learning that is interesting. More choice in what they are studying. And most important, real and relevant work. Going to school, she quipped shouldn't be like getting on an airplane, where "you're expected to sit down, face forward, strap yourself in, and turn off all electronic equipment!"

The old factory model worked, she acknowledged, in a factory age. Because information was scarce, printed, and filtered, schools had to rely on teachers as experts. But today, information is digital and ubiquitous, democratized through devices such as Wikipedia, free, open through open courseware, and exploding (1.2 billion terabytes of information exist today and it is anticipated that by 2020 there will be 35 billion terabytes). In this new situation, she quoted Seymour Papert (MIT mathematician and artificial intelligence pioneer): "the role of the teacher is to create the conditions for invention rather than provide ready-made knowledge."



Scott Smith, Mooresville Schools, North Carolina

What's Happening in Schools?

A panel from schools and higher education highlighted that there's much more going on with educational technology than casual observers understand.

- **Scott Smith.** The poverty rate in Mooresville NC schools is 40%. In an effort to transform learning and improve school culture, the district set out to close the digital divide. Today, 500 teachers have a MacBook and 4,000 students from fourth to twelfth grade have a MacBook Air they can take home with them, available 24/7. Combining these elements with a ubiquitous wireless infrastructure, the district has been able to generate impressive improvements. The proportion of students meeting state profi-

ciency benchmarks has climbed in six years to 92% (4th grade), 88% (middle school); and 91% (high school), from 74%, 73%, and 68% respectively, although Mooresville ranks in the bottom 15 of 150 districts state-wide. The costs? \$1.25 per day, per child, reported Smith.

- **Terri Bourdon.** At Virginia Tech, said Bourdon, 7,000 students are now taught nine courses, with on-demand help available more than 60 hours a week at the Math Emporium, a converted department store that essentially houses all beginning math programs for the university. Students study on their own 24/7, and during the 60 hours that help is available, graduate students and faculty walk the floor responding to signals for help. Much of the work can be done remotely; students are required to visit the Emporium only for proctored quizzes and tests. Despite that, she reported, the place is packed from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm daily.

- **Diane Smalley.** Saratoga Union, like every district in California, is struggling with massive funding cuts. A pre-K to 5th-grade district, Saratoga has to grow without money, in a district located in Silicon Valley with very high achieving students and no additional money for professional development. "We want to be a 'yes' district," noted Smalley. "If teachers want the technology, we want to provide it." Perversely, given its location and the high performance levels of its students, many teachers wonder why they have to change. "In a nutshell," Smalley concluded, "what's important for students is for administrators to be committed to improving the human capacity of the teachers in the district."

Neuroscience and Learning



University of Miami's Amishi Jha discusses building memory capacity

American philosopher William James once said: "The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will."

That insight is the foundation of a mindfulness research project directed by Amishi Jha that has drawn the attention of educators, psychiatrists, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Vatican.

One consequence of James's insight, said Jha, is that "The ability to multitask is a myth."

She described her research program at the University of Miami as focusing on the basic neural mechanisms of attention and working memory, each self-evidently important in both classroom management and learning.

Much of the impetus for this work rests on James's insight into "wandering attention." Wandering attention, she said, can be seen in scans of the brain. To-

day's neuroscientists, in fact, can actually identify regions of the brain in which certain types of cognitive activities develop. Mindfulness she defined as "a mental mode characterized by present moment experience without conceptual elaboration or emotional reactivity." It is "about holding steady in the present," not worrying about the past or "visualizing catastrophes in your future."

Mind wandering, Jha reported, tends to be about worry. It is, in fact, the default mode of the brain, as attention and working memory are "hijacked by pre-occupation with self." The default network is REST: Rapid, Ever present, Self Related, Thinking. It can be tamed via medication, psychotherapy, computer-based and mindfulness-based training.

Research indicates mindfulness training helps reduce stress in many situations. In health, it seems to improve quality of life for people with chronic pain, HIV,

cancer, and psoriasis. Stress related to depression, anxiety, PTSD, and ADHA has been ameliorated with mindfulness training. And it helps improve a (p.5)

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Apple Corporation's Stephanie Hamilton discusses technology and schools at October Roundtable meeting

The “embodied brain”

Dan Siegel, M.D. aims to provide a scientifically grounded, integrated view of human development to promote the growth of vibrant lives and healthy minds. He focuses on interpersonal neurobiology and an approach known as “mindshift,” and describes an “embodied brain” as the foundation of the approach. The embodied brain is made up of what most of us think of as the brain in the skull, plus the spinal cord and a “spider web of interconnected neurons throughout the body.”

Using his hand as a model for the brain, Siegel led the Roundtable through the different areas of the brain and the functions they govern. The following hardly does justice to the detailed presentation from Dr. Siegel, but he started with a simple request. He asked audience members to hold up their open hands and think of the wrist as the spinal cord and the heel of the hand as the brain stem. Then he said, “Bend your thumb across the palm of your hand and fold your four fingers over the thumb.” The thumb represents the limbic region of the brain, protected deep within the skull. Within that broad model of the brain, he described the following functions:

- The spinal cord is the neural cord providing head-to-body connections.
- The brain stem governs independent, unconscious bodily functions – whether you are awake, or bleed, or breathe. It also governs fight/flight/freeze responses to stress.
- The limbic area, on top of the brain stem, governs motivation, emotion, appraisal of meaning and value (is something worth paying attention to?) implicit memory (e.g., fear of dogs), attention and awareness (both required for deep learning), and attachment (the four “S’s”: safe, seen, soothed, and secure).
- The cortex, on top of the limbic area, is an incredibly complicated, layered mass of neural tissue. The frontal lobe (the middle knuckles of the fingers) contains the executive function, governing intentionality and decision-making (based on the information it obtains from the other lobes). The rear (occipital) lobe at the back of the hand holds the visual cortex and is responsible for sight. The parietal lobe (on top) manages sensory information and spatial recognition. And the temporal lobe (the fingertips) processes external auditory stimuli and helps form and understand speech.

Each portion of the brain is awash with a network of neurons that organize the central nervous system, Siegel emphasized. In the amazing instrument for learning that is the human brain, the cortex and limbic system fire off up to 100 billion neurons simultaneously, making trillions of instant synaptic connections throughout the body and the “embodied brain.”

Implications for Education. Embedded in each of these stages are many implications for learning. The neural core is mostly unformed at conception, so stress *in utero* (e.g., drugs or alcohol) seemingly embeds itself in the limbic or brain stem regions. Substance abuse during pregnancy “plays havoc” with the normal development of neurons, said Siegel, and “there is now some evidence that stress influences brain development.” The effects may be transmitted from generation to generation: Children and grandchildren of slaves or Holocaust and famine survivors demonstrate “epigenetic molecules” that seemed to pass traumatic memories on genetically.

The limbic area obviously governs important learning functions involving motivation, emotion, paying attention, and the like. Children and adults can be educated to focus more and to extend the amount of time between emotion and action (e.g., anger and striking out). It is here also that families and schools need to pay attention to the four “S’s”: safe, seen, soothed, and secure. Patterns of relationships with parents and schools shape how our minds work, reported Siegel. In the limbic area, he said, there is the reactive state of “no” – which leads to fighting, fleeing, freezing, or collapsing and induces shame and fear in young people. But there is also the receptive state of “yes,” which encourages young people to learn, grow, and take risks.

The prefrontal cortex is key to learning. It’s here that intentionality and focus develop. Beyond that it is the area in which the most important outcomes of education are developed: reflection, relationships, and resilience.

Siegel ended with a plea. Medical students do not compete with each other, he noted. They collaborate to compete against death. Students should not compete with each other either, he said. They should collaborate to solve the world’s challenges.

number of relationships – in marriages, between parents and children, and in the workplace.

The default mode of mind wandering is not entirely negative, she emphasized. Experiencing off-task thoughts during an ongoing task can lead to “eureka” moments – creative problem solving – along with insight and better planning for future. On the other hand, the negative effects can be serious, even debilitating. They include distractibility and difficulty completing tasks. Many people, she emphasized, anticipate catastrophic outcomes in both benign and threatening situations. And rumination and worry may lie behind such phenomena as math anxiety, choking under pressure, and

WHAT DOES MINDFULNESS LOOK LIKE IN DISTRICTS?

What does a program embodying some of the concepts outlined by Jha, Siegel, and Taxi Dog (p. 7) look like in schools? A series of Saratoga Union presentations from parents (Cynthia Miller), teachers (Lori Marshall & Vicki Andary of Foothill Elementary), and administrators (Diane Smalley and Lane Weiss) filled in that gap.

Saratoga has implemented the MindUp program developed by the Hawn Foundation. Saratoga Union participants described classrooms in which students had a better understanding of their emotions and developed exercises to keep their minds from wandering. Some initial skepticism from parents and teachers was readily overcome, reported Marshall, Andary, and Miller, by the evidence of quite small children succeeding and becoming more tuned in not only to their emotions but to the science of the brain.



Equally impressive, in an exercise designed by health teacher Evonne Lockhart, students in a video were able to describe and model how alcohol and drugs impaired their cognitive functions, acting out how the brain’s neurons, synapses, and receptors send signals around the body. They could describe how their minds and bodies interacted.

Two Saratoga sixth-graders, Cole Borgia and William Liu (r) outlined the benefits of MindUp with such impressive aplomb they earned a standing ovation. Among the benefits they cited: the ability to focus on their studies, control of their emotions, and success making friends with classmates while sharing rewarding experiences with them.

“If you want students who are focused, calm, and self-regulated, what’s not to like?” asked Saratoga Union superintendent Lane Weiss rhetorically.

