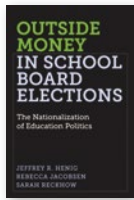


BOOK REVIEWS

Outside Money in School Board Elections: The Nationalization of Education Politics

by Jeffrey R. Henig, Rebecca Jacobsen and Sarah Reckhow, Harvard Education Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2019, 231 pp. with index, \$33 softcover



In the last seven or eight years, education writers have discovered the increasing flow of money going into local school board elections with large contributions coming from the “outside.”

Defining what is outside money is tricky, however. In this volume, if the financial contributor resides outside where the election is held, that is outside money. Millions and millions of dollars are now being spent in some high-profile, mostly urban school board elections.

The authors, university professors specializing in school policy and politics, have managed to get a handle on this phenomenon by studying five school districts in depth. Obviously, these are not drawn from a random sampling of all the 14,000 districts in the United States. The populations of the selected districts — and the districts experiencing the major influxes of outside funds in school politics — are overwhelmingly poor and minority and made up of Democratic voters.

While there are minor indications that the authors favor traditional public schools and unions, they present an evenhanded approach in this debate. Readers will have to make up their own minds about these issues. Those who live in places where school board elections are becoming increasingly contentious might want to read this book to better understand what may be happening in their local school board election.

Reviewed by Art Stellar, vice president, National Education Foundation, Hingham, Mass.

Improving Education in a World of Politics: Recommendations and Strategies for Effective Political Participation

by M. Scott Norton, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Md., 2018, 144 pp., \$25 softcover



The interconnection between education laws, policies and practices, and political events is significant and becoming ever-more complicated.

In *Improving Education in a World of Politics*, M.

Scott Norton, a former superintendent and professor emeritus at Arizona State University, explores the important community and governmental relationships that school leaders must cultivate to help shape the legal framework and subsequent policy actions that govern those of the school systems. These factors help school leaders identify the nonpartisan political nature of their community and its school-related views.

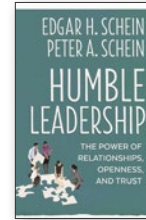
Norton identifies the importance of school leaders taking a proactive, savvy approach to understanding their community and knowing about how decision-makers operate. He provides an overview of power base identification and how to analyze such structures.

Improving Education in a World of Politics rightly affirms that school administrator preparation programs must include coursework and subsequent attention to why, when and how school leaders engage the political processes at the local, state and federal levels. This work, however, must be read with caution as some of the strategies it contains may not work to the benefit of schools and their leaders.

Reviewed by Brian L. Benzel, adjunct professor, Whitworth University, Spokane, Wash.

Humble Leadership: The Power of Relationships, Openness and Trust

by Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Oakland, Calif., 2018, 160 pp. with index, \$19.95 softcover



The authors of *Humble Leadership*, a father-son team, identify the “humbleness” of leadership and state that it is impossible for one person to have all the answers to the complexities of the

day. The core assumption of their leadership model places relationship- and trust-building as the crucial elements of effective leadership.

The Scheins build a leadership paradigm that emphasizes trust, collaboration and teamwork. Additionally, they delve deeply into a concept they refer to as “personalization,” where a leader’s goal is to work with the whole person, not just the employee. Multiple examples of this approach are weaved throughout the book, from the military to start-up tech companies.

Especially insightful were the examples of leadership skills in the future: how to lead without a physical presence and person-to-person contact. While written for the business world, the books’ viewpoints are applicable to K-12 education. The final chapter describes the steps to implement this process in the workplace. This is an excellent book to read with your colleagues.

Reviewed by Rob Clark, interim superintendent, Sequim School District, Sequim, Wash.

Five Stars: The Communication Secrets to Get from Good to Great

by Carmine Gallo, St. Martin’s Press, New York, N.Y., 2018, 244 pp. with index, \$17.99 softcover



I see three compelling reasons for superintendents and other educational leaders to read *Five Stars: The Communication Secrets to Get from Good to Great*. One, the book is packed with strategies

for mastering the art of persuasion and becoming a more effective communicator. Two, it makes a strong case that people today, especially young people, must develop the best possible communication

MORE BOOK REVIEWS

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The Achievement Gap: A Poverty Crisis, Not an Education Crisis

by Michele Wages

REVIEWED BY THERESA ALBAN

Is My School a Better School BECAUSE I Lead It?

by Baruti K. Kafele

REVIEWED BY JIM D. HATTABAUGH

Let the Children Play: How More Play Will Save Our Schools and Help Our Children Thrive

by Pasi Sahlberg and William Doyle

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL J. HYNES

The Make-or-Break Year: Solving the Dropout Crisis One Ninth Grader at a Time

by Emily Krone Phillips

REVIEWED BY MARC SPACE

skills for succeeding in the highly competitive, globally connected workplace. Three, the future of public education in the U.S. depends on our individual and collective ability to advocate for it and persuade the public to support it.

Author Carmine Gallo, a communications coach and former TV news anchor, challenges the outdated and misguided notion that communication is a “soft skill.” Rather, the power of making emotional connections through persuasive communication is the “winning ticket” as the world rapidly shifts to automation, big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning. Gallo cites examples of people who have advanced in their profession because they were five-star communicators — they learned how to inspire and motivate others to act.

The lead paragraph of my book review applies one of Gallo’s communication secrets. It’s the classic rule of three, which dates back to Aristotle and his contemporary Greek orators. Neuroscience now shows what they knew by intuition: that the average person can hold three or four ideas in short-term memory. If you want to know all of the communication secrets, you should read *Five Stars*.

Reviewed by Tom Hagley Jr., chief of staff, Vancouver Public Schools, Vancouver, Wash.

ABSTRACT

Superintendent Trustworthiness

An interpretive doctoral study of elementary school principals’ experiences and perceptions examined how they make sense of superintendent trustworthiness.

Justin V. Benna at the University of New Hampshire discovered four broad, inter-related and frequently paradoxical themes capture superintendent characteristics relating to trustworthiness. These themes identified ways in which the principals perceived (1) the nature and strength of a superintendent’s support; (2) the extent to and ways in which a superintendent engenders a sense of principal autonomy in school-level leadership; (3) a superintendent’s presence in the work of the principal and her/his school; and (4) a superintendent’s openness.

The study concluded a principal’s perception of superintendent trustworthiness

Aspiring Superintendents

AASA’s Aspiring Superintendent Academy® Blended Learning Model is accepting applications through Jan. 10, 2020 for a second cohort. The program features experiential learning about the superintendency.

A kickoff meeting will be held next Feb. 13-14 at AASA’s National Conference on Education in San Diego. For information and application, visit <https://aasa.org/aspiring-academy-blended.aspx>.

Systemwide Innovation

The Innovative and Transformational Leadership Network, run by AASA and the Successful Practices Network, has created a new cohort that is accepting district applicants through February.

The program supports district leadership teams in building capacity for innovation in their school systems. This network is open to AASA members and nonmembers.

More information is available at bit.ly/AASA-Innovate.



AASA School Solutions Center

These firms make up the AASA School Solutions Center.

PREMIER PARTNER

Sourcewell
Formerly NJPA

www.sourcewell-mn.gov

When you leverage our national purchasing power, we reinvest in student and community success.

Armor At Hand | www.armorathand.com

Smart shields for instant protection.

The Association Partner | TheAssociationPartner.com

Digital ad retargeting partner.

CitizenAID | www.citizenaid.us

Empowering school communities to save lives.

CrisisGo | www.crisisgo.com

Emergency communications tools for schools.

Diamond Assets | www.diamond-assets.com

Premier Apple hardware trade up service.

ECRA Group | www.ecragroup.com

Leadership, planning and analytical solutions.

E-Rate Advantage | www.erateadvantage.com

Full service E-Rate consulting services.

GotZoom | www.gotzoom.com

Student loan relief and forgiveness for district employees.

International Thought Leadership Network |

www.ithoughtleader.com

Provider of Orange Frog Workshop.

Jason Learning | www.jason.org

STEM education through exploration.

NFA-National Fire Adjustment | www.nfa.com

Insurance recovery for school districts.

Quantum Learning | www.quantumlearning.org

Transformative schoolwide professional development.

Renaissance® | www.renaissance.com

Assessment and personalized practice solutions.

Triway International Group | www.triwayinc.com

International education, exchange and recruitment.

UPS | www.ups.com

Shipping, freight, logistics, supplies for schools.

VitalInsight™ Technology | vitalinsightsolutions.com

Safer schools and higher performance.

Wonder Media Story Maker |

www.wondermediastorymaker.com

Transforming education by cultivating writers through animation.

School districts should do their own due diligence before signing contracts with companies that belong to the AASA School Solutions Center. More on the School Solutions Center can be found at www.aasa.org/ssc.