

September
2026



Promoting the improvement of the education & training of educational leaders through
teaching, research, and service

Volume 7,
Issue 2

President’s Message
Dr. Zorka Karanxha



Dear Members of FAPEL,

I wish you a wonderful start to the 2026–2027 academic year! I hope you also had time to rest and recharge this summer.

The FAPEL Board of Directors had a busy and productive summer. We welcomed Dr. Kevin Forehand as FAPEL Treasurer for 2026–2028, and I want to thank Dr. Daniel Reyes-Guerra for his service as Treasurer over the past two years.

As FAPEL continues to grow, we remain committed to strengthening our organization and serving our members. Building on past successes, we have expanded our membership and improved our financial stability. We are also committed to broad representation and participation across Florida’s public, private, large, and small institutions. FAPEL values the voices of faculty across all ranks, including tenure-track faculty, instructors, lecturers, and adjunct faculty, in our decision-making and service. Many of you already contribute through FAPEL’s five committees: Policy, Nominating, By-Laws, Awards, and Newsletter.

In the 2026–2027 academic year, our work will center on one theme: *From Inquiry to Impact: Research that Informs, Teaching that Transforms, and Service that Sustains Leadership in Florida*. We will host two conferences: the FAPEL Fall Online Conference on October 5, 2026, and the Spring Conference on March 1–2, 2027, in person at the University of South Florida in Tampa. To be more inclusive of all faculty and the nature of their work, the Spring Conference will span two days and include opportunities for faculty and students to present their research. Please look for the FAPEL call for research presentations. For the third year in a row, we will also continue our faculty celebration at the Awards Banquet, so please consider nominating your outstanding colleagues for all they do.

We will continue advancing FAPEL’s purpose: Promoting the preparation and development of educational leaders through teaching, research, and service. To support this work, we are maintaining and strengthening partnerships with organizations such as FASA, ICPEL, and UCEA. We also continue to partner with FLDOE as we prepare educational leaders who serve all students and families across Florida.

I wish you a successful and rewarding academic year.

FAPEL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Zorka Karanxha, University of South Florida
President-Elect William R. Black, University of South Florida
Past President Sheila Moore, University of Central Florida
Secretary & Website Editor Daniel Eadens, University of Central Florida
Treasurer Kevin Forehand, Florida State University

Newsletter Call for Future Submissions

FAPEL Newsletter promotes the flow of information, ideas, and services among professors of educational leadership at Florida Colleges and Universities. We want to hear from you about the content most relevant to your work and interests.

We welcome the following submissions:

- Promotions, awards, new publications, updates
- Job opportunities
- Resources
- Short pieces including op-ed, commentaries, research briefs and dissemination, etc.

Submissions can be sent to mmj24b@fsu.edu or through [FAPEL Newsletter survey](#).

Mario Jackson, Florida State University
Sheila Moore, University of Central Florida
FAPEL Newsletter Committee Chairs

ABOUT US

FAPEL is the Florida Association of Professors of Educational Leadership. The purpose of the organization is to promote the improvement of the education of educational leaders through teaching, research, and service within a program of activities including, but not limited to the following:

- to foster educational improvement through the inclusion of educational leadership in the teaching and learning process;
- to provide leadership in the effective implementation and evaluation of statewide projects and programs;
- to promote the flow of information, ideas, and services among professors of educational leadership in Florida;
- to work cooperatively and collaboratively with similar state, regional, national, and global organizations;
- to sponsor professional conferences and workshops on behalf of the membership;
- to provide an organized forum for experimentation, research, and development;
- to provide leadership in the development, implementation, evaluation, and redesign of educational leadership consistent with valued research and history, and most recent needs, research, and development; and
- to provide expertise drawn from the membership to help shape, define, implement, evaluate, and positively influence educational leadership policy and for all interested or affected stakeholders.

FAPEL

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF
PROFESSORS OF
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

FAPEL FALL 2026
MEETING AGENDA

From Inquiry to Impact:

Research That Informs, Teaching That Transforms,
and Service That Sustains Educational Leadership in Florida



OCTOBER 5, 2026



9:00 AM – 12:00 PM



VIA ZOOM

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	SPEAKERS / PRESENTERS
 9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	FAPEL Welcome FAPEL President’s Introduction to the FAPEL Board of Directors and Opening Remarks	FAPEL President: Zorka Karanxha FAPEL Board of Directors: Bill Black, Sheila Moore, Kevin Forehand, Daniel Eadens Pearson: Heather S. Klesch, VP Educator Solutions for Licensing and Learning FASA Executive Director: Michelle White
 9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	FAPEL Business Meeting	FAPEL President: Zorka Karanxha FAPEL Treasurer: Kevin Forehand
 9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	FLDOE FELE Data and Updates from the Field	Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development, and Retention Jenny Black, Sarah Hall, Ashley Harvey, and Marsha Dixon Office of Post-Secondary Assessment Phil Canto, Suleyman Olgar, Hope Bryant
 10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	BREAK	
 10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Session 1	Session 1: Christopher Thomas: Centaurs, Cyborgs, and Clones: The Law and Ethics of AI in Schools
 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Session 2	Session 2: Jessica Janasiewicz, FASA Advocacy: The climate of advocacy in shifting policy environment



JOIN US ON ZOOM!
Scan the QR code
or click the link to join.



Zoom Meeting Link
<https://ucf.zoom.us/j/98117521073?pwd=3NF2tM5L9hku1ILMyuwaG47nCtE5gn.1&jst=3>

FAPEL BOARD
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President Elect

Sheila Moore
Past President

Kevin Forehand
Treasurer

Daniel Eadens
Secretary



LEARN MORE &
STAY CONNECTED!



www.fapel.org/fall2026



info@fapel.org

We look forward to
seeing you in Tampa!



FAPEL.Florida



FAPEL Florida

Call for Participants/ Dissemination

How Do Educational Leaders “Show Up”?



HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

A University of Florida Research Study

We are exploring the dispositional characteristics of educational leaders across career stages—from aspiring leaders to emerging leaders to senior district leaders.



PERSONALIZED INSIGHT

Receive a comprehensive Indigo Assessment report for your professional and personal reflection.



ANONYMOUS and NON-EVALUATIVE

No district or school identifiers are collected. Participant information is separated from research data, and all analyses and reported findings are anonymous and aggregated.

PARTICIPATION INVOLVES THE INDIGO ASSESSMENT

A multidimensional instrument that measures behavioral styles, motivators, and professional skills. See attached for a sample profile.





INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE OR SUPPORTING RECRUITMENT?

Dr. Walter Fernando Balser, Principal Investigator
Education Policy Research Center
College of Education, University of Florida
wbalsen@coe.ufl.edu

IRB202600519

Have you ever wondered how educational leaders show up as their authentic selves, and how the systems around them may shape those dispositions over time? What behavioral preferences, motivators, and skills move through our leadership pipelines? Do we tend to promote certain profiles over others? Do we adapt from our natural dispositions—and, if so, what are the implications? And what might this mean for how we build diverse, complementary leadership teams?

A research team at the University of Florida is building what we hope will become one of the most robust datasets of educational leadership dispositions, with a goal of **500+ participants nationwide** across aspiring, emerging, and experienced leadership roles.

We’d love FAPEL’s help in reaching that goal. In addition to helping us build a dataset to explore these and many other research questions, participants receive their own personalized Indigo report. Let’s learn more about how our leaders show up, and what that might mean for the teams and systems we build. To receive the formal recruitment email to share with your network, or to learn more about the study, please contact **Dr. Walter Fernando Balser, University of Florida**, at wbalsen@coe.ufl.edu.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

PRINCIPALS MAKE AN IMPACT.

Share Your Story. Shape the Future.

You are invited to participate in a doctoral research study exploring how school principals successfully lead schools where the principal and the majority of students are from different racial backgrounds.



ABOUT THE STUDY

This study seeks to develop a theory that explains the processes, actions, and strategies principals use to foster positive school climate and student success in schools where at least 70% of students are racially/ethnically different from the principal.



YOUR LEADERSHIP. YOUR PERSPECTIVE. OUR FUTURE.

Your experience can help inform practice and policy to support student success in diverse schools.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

You may be eligible if you:

- Are a current or former public school principal in a school where at least 70% of students are racially/ethnically different from you
- Have served as a principal in that setting for at least 3 years
- Have led a school with evidence of positive school climate (from at least two stakeholder groups) and positive academic outcomes as indicated by your state’s accountability system and ESSA non-academic indicators



THE STUDY FOCUSES ON:

- How principals interpret and navigate leading in racially mismatched settings
- Leadership actions and strategies that contribute to positive school climate and student success
- The decisions, relationships, and supports that influence these outcomes
- The processes that lead to effective leadership in diverse school settings



WHAT TO EXPECT

Participation involves a one-time, virtual interview (approximately 60–90 minutes) at a time that is convenient for you. Your participation is voluntary and confidential.



CONFIDENTIALITY ASSURED

Your identity and your school’s identity will be protected. Pseudonyms will be used, and all data will be securely stored and used for research purposes only.



YOUR VOICE CAN HELP ADVANCE EQUITABLE LEADERSHIP AND CREATE STRONGER SCHOOLS FOR ALL STUDENTS.



INTERESTED OR HAVE QUESTIONS? PLEASE EMAIL THE RESEARCHER:

sscott48@fau.edu

This study is conducted by Safiya Scott, doctoral candidate at Florida Atlantic University.



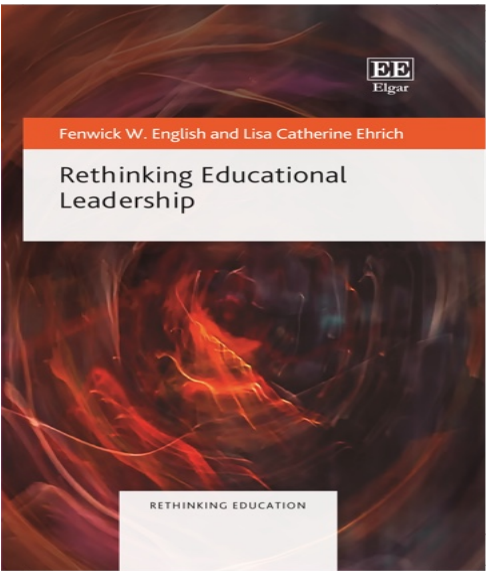
Help Shape the Future of Research for Florida School Leaders

FASA values the important role FAPEL members play in advancing the knowledge base that informs educational leadership practice and policy. As we explore ways to strengthen connections between researchers and practitioners, we invite you to share your perspectives on current research priorities, emerging issues, and opportunities for collaboration. Your input will help FASA better understand how we can support meaningful research partnerships and facilitate studies that address the real-world challenges facing Florida's schools and educational leaders. [CLICK HERE](#) to complete the survey.

Member Accomplishments/ Updates



Dr. Fenwick English, Professor and Interim Chair of Educational Leadership at **Florida Gulf Coast University** and co-author, Dr. Lisa Catherine Ehrich, are pleased to announce the release of their new book entitled **Rethinking Educational Leadership** in November by Edward Elgar publishers.



The book introduces a new way of thinking about educational leadership with attention to the pivotal role of theory in understanding, improving and ultimately changing current practice. It also includes a critique on many fronts of the dominant social science approach to understanding and improving educational leadership.

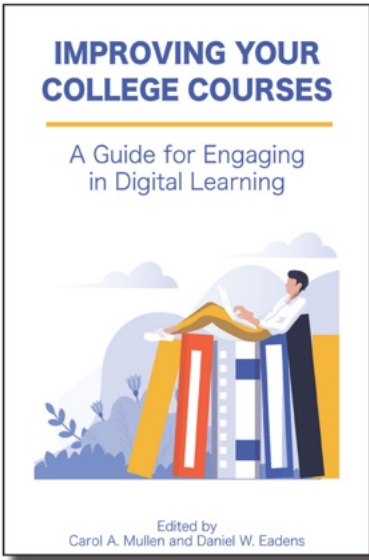
Dr. Anindya Kundu (Associate Prof, Ed Policy Studies at FIU), has been increasingly engaged in public scholarship, often writing about developments in Florida politics and the ways they shape the experiences of students, educators, and other institutional leaders.

- On Miami-Dade reversing universal school lunch: <https://www.the74million.org/article/miamis-decision-to-end-universal-school-lunch-harms-more-than-just-hungry-kids/> (The 74 Million)
- On ICE partnering with Florida universities and campus climate: <https://theconversation.com/we-teach-at-a-florida-university-that-agreed-to-cooperate-with-ice-and-we-worry-that-it-is-making-our-students-feel-less-safe-277911> (The Conversation)
- On student protests and student agency in India: <https://economics.times.indiatimes.com/news/morning-brief-podcast/morning-brief-podcast-cockroaches-courts-committees-what-did-indias-genz-really-win/podcast/132673156.cms> (India's The Economic Times)
- On needing agency in a structurally stiff world: <https://www.npr.org/2026/01/23/nx-s1-5638511/feeling-powerless-how-reaching-out-to-others-not-just-grit-can-help> (TED Radio Hour)
- Florida's Anti-Vaccine Plans: <https://theconversation.com/why-floridas-plan-to-end-vaccine-mandates-will-likely-spread-to-other-conservative-states-264734> (The Conversation)

Why Florida's plan to end vaccine mandates will likely spread to other conservative states

Miami's Decision to End Universal School Lunch Harms More Than Just Hungry Kids

We teach at a Florida university that agreed to cooperate with ICE – and we worry that it is making our students feel less safe



Dr. Daniel W. Eadens, University of Central Florida, and co-editor Dr. Carol A. Mullen are pleased to announce the publication of their new book, *Improving Your College Courses: A Guide for Engaging in Digital Learning*, published by Myers Education Press in 2026. The book explores innovative approaches to college teaching and digital learning, with attention to engagement, emerging technologies, AI, equity, and ethical practice. The collection offers practical and scholarly perspectives for faculty seeking to create meaningful, human-centered learning experiences in today's increasingly technology-rich educational environments.



Dr. Krisdhal Ugarte-Torre, Florida International University recently published an article in the Excellence in Education Journal.

- Ugarte-Torre, K.**, Murray, J., & Riaz, O. (2026). Building Trust, One Family at a Time: A New Principal's Journey Toward Community Engagement. (EEJ) (ISSN 2474-4166) 9.

Dr. Laura Boilini and two of her colleagues, Drs. Rakesh Maurya and Clay Carmichael of the **University of North Florida** are undertaking a study with the St. Johns County School District in the fall of 2026. The purpose of the study is to identify, from the assistant principal perspective, leadership actions aligned with the Florida Educational Leadership Standards. The work is a shared partnership focused on leadership competencies associated with the role of the assistant principal in K-12 schools, and the results will guide program development in the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership at UNF as well as district-level leadership initiatives.



Member Accomplishments/ Updates (cont’d)

Dr. F. Chris Curran, University of Florida, was named a Research Fellow of the Southern Education Foundation, awarded a University of Florida Research Foundation Professorship, and recently published an article in the Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis (EEPA) journal.



Research Article

Parents’ Perspectives on School Discipline: Results from a National Survey

F. Chris Curran¹ and Jiyeon Goo¹



Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
1–26
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DOI: 10.3102/01623737261468281
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Sage



Dr. Carla Sparks, National Louis University, created the *Education Influencers* podcast in spring 2025 to spotlight educational leaders who are transforming research into practice. Since its launch, Dr. Sparks has published 20 episodes featuring doctoral graduates from National Louis University, and educational leaders from across the field discussing innovation, equity, leadership, and educational change. The podcast is available on [Spotify](#) and [Apple](#).



PRAISE: Preparing for Readiness and Academic Improvement for Pre-K ELs

PRAISE Cohort 4 Launches Final Year of Professional Learning Initiative

Florida Atlantic University's PRAISE team recently shared results from its 2026 Summer Institute, which launched the fourth and final cohort of the federally funded National Professional Development project. The initiative is led by Dr. Daniel Reyes-Guerra and Dr. Sabrina Sembiante, with support from Dr. Cynthia B. Bauman, Ms. Heather Peltier, and Ms. Christina Butler, in partnership with the School District of Osceola County to support prekindergarten educators, instructional coaches, and school leaders in strengthening instructional practices and improving outcomes for young English Learners.

The four-day Summer Institute brought together educators and leaders from seven schools for professional learning focused on classroom interactions, language and literacy development, family engagement, data-informed planning, instructional coaching, and collaborative leadership. Participant feedback indicated exceptionally high levels of satisfaction, with respondents highlighting the practical relevance of the content, opportunities for application, and support for school-based implementation.

Since its inception, PRAISE has engaged 217 educators across 24 schools and reached approximately 936 kindergarten students through a combination of summer institutes, professional learning teams, instructional coaching, learning walks, and ongoing school-based support. As the project enters its final cohort year, participants will continue developing strategies to strengthen teaching, learning, and school readiness outcomes for young multilingual learners and their families.

FAPEL members captioned below: Dr. Daniel Reyes-Guerra, Dr. Cynthia Bauman, and Ms. Christina Butler (From left to right).



Membership Resources and Information

FAPEL is a non-profit organization that promotes the improvement of the education and training of educational leaders in the state of Florida through teaching, research, and service. Membership is open to any faculty member in any Florida college or university with assigned responsibilities in teaching, research, and service for educational leadership upon payment of annual dues. Graduate students in educational leadership and policy may also become members. Please, review the web-links that are available on our FAPEL website: <https://fapel-florida.org/>



Member Institutions

Barry University
Florida Atlantic University
Florida Gulf Coast University
Florida International University
Florida State University
National Louis University
Nova Southeastern University
Southeastern University

St. Leo University
Stetson University
University of Central Florida
University of Florida
University of North Florida
University of South Florida
University of Tampa
University of West Florida



FAPEL and FASA Partnerships for Members

FASA values its longstanding partnership with the Florida Association of Professors of Educational Leadership and is pleased to offer special membership opportunities for FAPEL members and their students. Professors may join FASA for \$100 annually, and graduate students are eligible for membership at just \$50. Membership provides access to leadership resources, advocacy updates, professional learning opportunities, and a strong statewide network of school leaders. [CLICK HERE](#) for membership information.

Upcoming Events

October 5, 2026: FAPEL Fall Virtual Meeting, 9:00am-12:00pm.

November 18- 21, 2026: University Council for Educational Administration, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Hotel blocks and registration are now open.

Resources

FASA as Pedagogical Support for Educational Leadership & Policy Classes

Executive Director, **Michele White**, is happy to speak with educational leadership classes about current issues, legislative and policy developments, and the challenges and opportunities facing Florida's schools and welcomes the opportunities to support faculty and engage with future school leaders. To schedule a class presentation or discussion, contact Michele at mwhite@fasa.net.

Education Influencers Podcast ([Spotify](#) and [Apple](#))

Hosted by **Dr. Carla Sparks**, **National Louis University**, Education Influencers features conversations with educational leaders who are transforming research into practice, advancing innovation, equity, and meaningful change in schools and communities.

FASA Leadership Lounge Podcast - <https://www.fasa.net/fasa-leadership-lounge-podcast>

Join FASA in the Leadership Lounge. Each week, we will discuss education leadership trends, legislative updates that impact you and your profession, speak with leaders from Florida and beyond, and much more!

Chalk & Gavel- <https://www.chalkandgavel.com/>

Chalk & Gavel is an education law podcast hosted by **Dr. Chris Thomas** (an assistant professor at the **University of Florida**), and Dr. Jamie Kudlats. Both professors of educational leadership and former K-12 educators, Chris and Jamie demystify the complex and evolving legal landscape that impacts our schools.