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New Era Superintendents Launches The Achievement Alliance, a National Network of Superintendent Collaboratives

Retired Montana superintendent Tobin Novasio will lead the Mental Health Collaborative, built in partnership with the Cook Center for Human Connection

Park City, Utah — September 22, 2026 — New Era Superintendents today launched The Achievement Alliance, a series of specialized superintendent **Collaboratives** that creates a national peer network for school system leaders built on a single idea: no superintendent should have to solve a problem alone. Instead, superintendents ought to pursue opportunities together.

The initial series will include at least four Collaboratives. Two of them — the **Mental Health Collaborative** and the **Executive Leadership Collaborative** — are in partnership with the **Cook Center for Human Connection**. **Tobin Novasio**, a retired superintendent with 20 years of school system leadership and one of the country's most credible voices on student mental health, will lead the Mental Health Collaborative.

Novasio joined the Cook Center as Superintendent Advocate after stepping down as superintendent of Hardin Public Schools in Montana. During his career leading school systems, Novasio was named Montana Superintendent of the Year in 2016 and received the G.V. Erickson Award in 2020, the highest honor a school administrator can receive in the state. He has served on AASA's Governing Board and Executive Committee and led both the Montana Association of School Superintendents and the Montana Rural Education Association. He sits on the national advisory boards of Hope Squad, Horace Mann League of the USA, and the Cook Center for Human Connection. At Hardin, he took one of the first districts in the country through JED and AASA's District Comprehensive Approach, building a mental health strategy for a rural community serving students of the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Nations, under the real constraints most districts face.

“We selected Tobin because he has already done the job we're asking superintendents to do,” said **Matt Kinnaman**, Founder and CEO of New Era Superintendents. “This network exists to get every student proficient in reading and math. You do not get there with students who are in crisis. Tobin proved that out in a rural Montana district with hard limits on time and money — and now every superintendent in this network gets what he learned.”

The New Era Achievement Alliance Collaboratives are small working groups of sitting superintendents. Collaborative members share challenges, get direct feedback from like-minded peers, and collaborate to develop strategies that are replicable and scalable. The Mental Health Collaborative treats student and staff well-being as core district strategy rather than an initiative bolted onto academics; collaborative

members will gain proven insights and build a mental health plan for their own districts, stress-tested by peers and real-world practice.

The Executive Leadership Collaborative addresses the daily realities of the role — board relationships, community trust, and communicating under pressure, with the objective of developing a “world-class CEO” mindset that equips superintendents to think more strategically and entrepreneurially.

“For students to reach strong academic growth, we have to make sure their basic needs are met first,” said **Novasio**. “Every superintendent in this country already knows that. What most of them don’t have is a room full of peers to work it out with, honestly, without it looking like weakness inside their own district. That is what we’re building. In my years of leading schools, the most valuable thing anyone ever gave me was another superintendent’s straight answer.”

The Cook Center for Human Connection brings the clinical grounding. Its programs — including ParentGuidance.org, My Life Is Worth Living, and Staff Guidance — deliver mental health support to families and educators nationwide.

“Families need to know who to trust when it comes to mental health,” said **Anne Brown**, President and CEO of the Cook Center for Human Connection. “In almost every community in America, that trust runs through the superintendent’s office. That is why this partnership matters, and it is why we wanted Tobin. He has spent his entire career proving that this office is where mental health support either reaches a family or never does.”

Founding membership is open now, and seats are limited. Superintendents who join the first Collaboratives help set how they run — the agenda, the format, and which problems get tackled first. Founding collaborative members will gain all the insights and benefits of the sessions and will have formative influence on the launch of the overall initiative. An introductory webinar is scheduled for **October 6 at 11am MT**. [Register here](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Nh9F1vizQZ2R0T40TaKmQA) (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Nh9F1vizQZ2R0T40TaKmQA). The first working sessions will launch at the [New Era Superintendents Achievement Summit](https://www.newerasuperintendents.com/achievement-summit-2026) (<https://www.newerasuperintendents.com/achievement-summit-2026>), November 4-6, 2026, in Park City, Utah.

If you’d like to learn more about Collaboratives and how to become a member, please join us for a live webinar Tuesday, October 6 at 11am MT. [Register here](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Nh9F1vizQZ2R0T40TaKmQA) (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Nh9F1vizQZ2R0T40TaKmQA).

Superintendents can review the Collaboratives and request a founding seat at www.newerasuperintendents.com/achievement-alliance.

About New Era Superintendents

New Era Superintendents is a growing national network of school system leaders committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure every student receives the best opportunities to achieve proficiency in reading and math, and success in life. Learn more at www.newerasuperintendents.com.

About the Cook Center for Human Connection

The Cook Center for Human Connection works to prevent suicide and support mental health by strengthening human connection. Through ParentGuidance.org, My Life Is Worth Living, ElizaChat, and Staff Guidance, the Cook Center provides no-cost, evidence-based mental health resources to parents, students, and educators nationwide. Learn more at www.cookcenter.org.

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