



**National Association of  
School Superintendents**  
United in Common Purpose: Each Other's Success

**Leslie Haack, Deputy Superintendent  
Katy Independent School District  
Katy, Texas**



## **INTRODUCTION**

Meet Leslie Haack, Deputy Superintendent of Katy Independent School District in Katy, Texas, one of the largest and most high-performing districts in the region. Serving more than 95,000 students across 81 campuses, Katy ISD employs over 14,000 full-time staff, including nearly 6,900 certified teachers dedicated to academic excellence. Located west of Houston, the district is widely recognized not only for its strong academic outcomes and impressive 94.9% graduation rate, but also for its proud traditions, including nationally competitive athletics. Katy ISD's community is characterized by high levels of education and engagement, with families who maintain strong expectations for student achievement and district performance.

### **Education**

Leslie holds a Bachelor of Arts in Language Arts from the University of Kansas, and a Master of Education Administration from Prairie View A&M University.

### **Experience**

Leslie began her career in public education in 1985 at Mayde Creek High School in Katy, ISD. After several years living out of state, she returned to the district in 1998 as a teacher and assistant coach at Taylor High School. The following year, she opened Cinco Ranch High School, where she taught and coached for two years before being appointed Assistant Principal in 2001.

In 2004, Leslie was promoted to Associate Principal at Morton Ranch High School. She continued her leadership trajectory in 2008 when she was named principal of Sealy High School in Sealy ISD, serving in that role for one year before accepting a principalship and opening George Ranch High School in Lamar CISD. During her tenure in Lamar CISD, she advanced to Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education and, three years later, was promoted to Deputy Superintendent of Operations.

In 2019, Leslie returned to Katy ISD, where she currently serves as Deputy Superintendent overseeing the Departments of School Leadership and Campus Support, Innovative Pathways, Athletics, Library Services, and Superintendent liaison for the Katy ISD Police Department.

### **Outstanding Achievements**

Leslie's leadership is marked by a series of impactful, forward-thinking initiatives that have significantly advanced student access and instructional innovation across the district. Among her most notable achievements is the successful implementation of a one-to-one Chromebook initiative, ensuring that every student in grades 3 through 12 has consistent access to digital learning tools. She also led a strategic realignment of district departments to better support innovative academic pathways, fostering programs aligned with both college and career readiness. In addition, Leslie spearheaded the design and launch of a comprehensive virtual high school, expanding opportunities for students through flexible remote and hybrid learning

models while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

Complementing these efforts, she has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the Katy Leadership Pipeline (KLP), a strategic initiative focused on recruiting and training assistant principals to ensure a strong and sustainable bench of future campus leaders. Under her leadership, the KLP has expanded to include an assistant principal cohort in partnership with Texas A&M University–Victoria, providing structured, high-quality leadership development. This work has further evolved to support the cultivation of a future teacher pipeline through paid student teaching internships, strengthening the district’s long-term talent development system and reinforcing its commitment to excellence in leadership at every level.

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH LESLIE HAACK**

### **Tell us about how you see today’s superintendent.**

Today’s superintendent is a visionary leader who designs the future of learning while strategically sustaining and growing student enrollment. This means creating engaging programs and campus experiences that inspire students, build pride, and strengthen connections to the district. The role requires balancing strategic oversight with bold innovation—anticipating change and shaping it to ensure success for every student.

An effective superintendent advances innovation beyond traditional models by leveraging data to personalize learning, expanding access to diverse pathways such as career and technical education, dual credit, and flexible learning options, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This work is not about adding programs, but about reimagining systems to remove barriers and create meaningful opportunities that attract and retain students.

Equally important, the superintendent serves as a connector—building strong partnerships with educators, families, and the community to co-create sustainable solutions and strengthen student engagement.

Ultimately, today’s superintendent leads with a clear moral purpose: a commitment to access and excellence. By aligning vision, resources, and accountability, they create systems where all students can thrive.

### **What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?**

After seven years in the role, I see my first three years as foundational in shaping my approach to innovation and student success. I learned that innovation is less about programs and more about people and systems. While I initially focused on launching initiatives, I came to understand that lasting impact comes from building capacity—developing leaders, empowering teachers, and creating systems that sustain growth.

I also gained a deeper understanding that access alone is not enough; systems must be intentionally designed to remove barriers so every student can succeed. Equally important was learning to listen—many of the most effective ideas came from classrooms, campuses, and the community.

Finally, I learned that innovation requires both courage and coherence—challenging the status quo while aligning efforts to a clear vision and long-term sustainability.

Today, I focus on building a cohesive, intentional culture of innovation centered on student

success.

**Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.**

One of the most important actions colleagues can take is to share ideas and lessons learned in ways that build a culture of disciplined innovation—where ideas are encouraged, tested, and refined to improve student outcomes.

Together with colleagues in Katy ISD, we have learned the value of developing “Innovative Pathways” campuses—designated sites where ideas aligned to district goals are intentionally piloted and scaled. Through this work, we have created hubs for innovation that generate proven, replicable models, allowing us to extend successful practices across the organization. As a result, innovation is not confined to select campuses, but is adapted and implemented in more traditional settings, ensuring systemwide impact and expanded opportunities for student success.

This work must remain grounded in access and opportunity by consistently asking: Who benefits, and who might be left out? Embedding this lens ensures innovation expands success for all students.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a system where innovation thrives with purpose and delivers measurable impact for every student.

**Submitted by:**

**Leslie Haack**