

# ETHAN AKE-LITTLE

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## COMPETENCIES

### Governance &

### Strategic Leadership

Board Governance, Policy Development, Strategic Planning, Organizational Leadership, Change Management

### Employee & Labor Relations

Collective Bargaining, Grievances & Arbitrations, Talent Management, Compliance, Investigations

### Data Analytics & Finance

Personnel Budgeting, Compensation Design, Benefits Administration, Budgetary Forecasting, HRIS & Data Governance

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## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Experienced school administrator with deep leadership experience spanning district administration, labor relations, human capital, finance, governance, academic programming, and organizational transformation. A scholar-practitioner and system leader who brings a research-informed approach to organizational improvement, workforce strategy, policy implementation, and evidence-based decision-making. Offers a dual perspective shaped by leadership roles on both the management and labor sides of education, with demonstrated success in aligning human resources management, academic programming, legal compliance, fiscal stewardship, and board governance.

### Selected Leadership Highlights

- Experienced in leading complex work across both the management and labor sides of education, bringing extensive depth in collective bargaining, union relations, investigations, and negotiations.
- Proven capacity to support both instructional and operational leadership, including STEM initiative development, educator effectiveness systems, district reorganization, and student-support alignment.
- Scholar-practitioner with a strong record of research-informed leadership, policy analysis and implementation, professional publications and presentations, and graduate teaching, bringing analytical rigor to executive decision-making.
- Trusted advisor to boards, executive leadership, and senior stakeholders on policy, compliance, workforce strategy, employee relations, compensation design, and institutional risk management.
- Adept at leading in highly regulated, community-facing environments where public trust, legal compliance, fiscal accountability, and workforce stability must be advanced simultaneously.

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## EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

### Education

J.D., Certificate in Business Law | Temple University Beasley School of Law (Expected Graduation: May 2028)

Ph.D., Urban Education and Policy (Major), Educational Leadership (Minor)

Temple University College of Education & Human Development

Dissertation: To Leave or Not to Leave: A Population Study Investigating How Compensation & Auxiliary Spending Influence Teacher Turnover in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

M.Ed., Secondary Science Education | Chestnut Hill College School of Graduate Studies

B.A., History & Political Science (Major), Biological Sciences (Minor) | Drexel University College of Arts & Sciences

### Certifications

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Administrative I: Principal, PK-12

Instructional II: English, 7-12; Social Studies 7-12; General Science, 7-12; Biology 7-12; Chemistry, 7-12; Physics, 7-12

Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) | Human Resources Certification Institute

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## EXPERIENCE

SENIOR EMPLOYEE & LABOR RELATIONS ANALYST, City of Philadelphia

Mar 2026–Present

Serve in a senior labor-relations role within one of the nation's largest municipal employers, advising on complex employee relations, compliance, and contract matters across a highly visible public-sector environment with 17 municipal bargaining units. Bring enterprise scale experience in workforce risk, executive advising, and union-management strategy in politically complex, community-facing systems.

### Labor Strategy & Executive Advising

- Advise on labor and employee relations matters affecting a large municipal workforce represented by 17 city unions, including operational, supervisory, and public safety bargaining units.
- Prepare exhibits and provide technical support to the City's bargaining team in contract negotiations and interest arbitration, helping shape legally defensible labor strategy in a high-stakes public environment.

### Risk Management & Compliance

- Manage complex employee-relations matters involving the ADA & FMLA, ensuring compliance with federal and local standards.
- Conduct full-cycle investigations into discrimination and harassment allegations, producing narrative analysis for executive review.

### Public-Sector Systems Leadership

- Operate at the intersection of labor, law, policy, and public accountability within the workforce structure of the sixth-largest city in the United States, strengthening capacity to navigate stakeholder complexity, public scrutiny, and community-facing governance.
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**DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, *Southern Lehigh School District* (Center Valley, PA)**

Aug 2023-Aug 2025

Served as a senior central-office leader in a high-performing district enrolling approximately 3,150 students and employing 425+ staff. Led districtwide talent and labor strategy while also managing major portions of the district's fiscal, compliance, governance, and program-support agenda.

*Board Governance & Executive Leadership*

- Chaired the Board's Policy Committee, setting the monthly policy agenda and guiding cross-functional review with curriculum, student services, and administrative leaders to ensure governance decisions were compliant, operationally sound, and student-centered.
- Served as Title IX Coordinator and Open Records Officer, leading employee-related investigations and vetting all public information requests in a politically sensitive public-school setting.

*Talent, Labor & Organizational Strategy*

- Directed all district HR functions and served as a lead management voice in labor relations, including grievances, arbitrations, and collective bargaining strategy.
- Served on the Board contract negotiation team and was chief author of both the Administrator Compensation Plan and Support Staff Compensation Plan, strengthening compensation governance for non-represented groups.
- Revamped recruitment and onboarding systems to ensure that 16 professional vacancies (roughly 7% of the bargaining unit) were filled for the 2025–26 school year.
- Redesigned the HR website and onboarding resources to improve transparency, candidate experience, and operational efficiency.

*Finance, Operations & Compliance*

- Built the district's Position Control Database by integrating credential, assignment, compensation, and benefits data across systems, improving forecasting and alignment between staffing decisions and payroll expenditures.
- Prepared the district's personnel budget, which represented approximately 70% of the district's \$74 million budget, using zero based budgeting principles to align staffing resources with district priorities.
- Partnered with payroll and business-office personnel to support FLSA, ACA, and 403(b)/457(b) compliance, reconcile personnel and payroll data, and assist with the district's annual audit and Annual Financial Report review.

*Academic & Programmatic Support*

- Compiled the district's Educator Effectiveness Annual Report and worked with the Director of Curriculum & Instruction to align the Educator Induction Plan with updated PDE Comprehensive Plan requirements.
- Developed district guidance on Act 45 and partnered with the Office of Teaching & Learning to monitor Act 48 compliance and Chapter 14 paraprofessional training requirements.
- Redesigned evaluation instruments for nonprofessional special education staff so that performance measures were more clearly aligned with student-support outcomes, including IEP and 504 implementation.

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**DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, *Wallingford-Swarthmore School District* (Wallingford, PA)**

Jan 2022-Dec 2022

Served as a senior district administrator in a nationally high-performing district enrolling approximately 3,750 students and employing 525+ staff. Operated across human capital, fiscal planning, governance, benefits strategy, and academic-support systems, with direct influence on central-office structure and districtwide strategic priorities.

*Board Governance & System Design*

- Chaired the Board's Policy Committee and developed Title IX compliance resources, including presentations, training materials, and web content, to inform the broader school community regarding rights, procedures, and supports.
- Authored the district's Central Office Reorganization Report, proposing a more coherent leadership structure that included new academic and student-support roles such as Director of STEM Education, Supervisor of Counseling & Nursing, and the district's first Office of School Safety & Security.

*Talent, Labor & Organizational Strategy*

- Reformed district hiring and onboarding to give building leaders greater control over talent selection and successfully filled 33 certificated vacancies (roughly 10% of the bargaining unit), for the start of the 2022–23 school year.
- Created competitive salary schedules for non-represented employee groups and authored a Memorandum of Understanding that stabilized substitute staffing costs while funding DEIB teacher stipends for 25 staff members at net-zero budget impact.

*Finance, Benefits & Operational Stewardship*

- Created the annual personnel budget using a total-rewards framework that incorporated salary, benefits, PSERS, and step progression while aligning expenditures to the PDE Chart of Accounts.
- Served as a Management Trustee on the Delaware County Public Schools Healthcare Trust and contributed to a multi-year rate reduction plan, strengthening understanding of consortium governance, investments, and long-range district cost control.
- Led evaluation and transition of a new third-party benefits administrator, ensuring compliance with plan documents, federal reporting requirements, and IRS nondiscrimination testing under IRC §§125, 105(h), and 129.

*Academic & Student-Support Alignment*

- Advised Student Services leadership on personnel reallocation to address demographic shifts and reduce service-provider spending.
- Collaborated with the Office of Teaching & Learning leadership to redesign academic calendars in compliance with collective bargaining obligations and PDE instructional-time requirements.

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, *American Federation of Teachers Pennsylvania* (Plymouth Meeting, PA)**

Jan 2020–Dec 2021

Led statewide operations for an education and public-sector labor organization supporting 60+ affiliates, 36,000+ members, a staff of 12 employees, and an annual operating budget of approximately \$2.5 million. Functioned as a chief executive with responsibility for operations, finance, talent systems, organizational growth, policy strategy, and stakeholder relations across K–12 and higher education.

### Executive Leadership & Organizational Growth

- Reengineered the organization's structure by creating a Data & IT Specialist role and hiring an Affiliate Organizer, strengthening data quality, communication, and expansion capacity.
- Oversaw support for the successful organization of new affiliates by coordinating staffing, finances, and strategic resources across state and national teams.

### Finance, Operations & Data Systems

- Designed an Affiliate Dashboard in Power BI to provide local leaders with real-time visibility into membership, finances, and reporting obligations, advancing data-driven decision-making statewide.
- Modernized information systems for remote operations using Office 365, SharePoint, Teams, and VoIP, while strengthening data privacy procedures such as two-factor authentication.
- Restructured the organization's \$2.5 million budget, generating approximately \$400,000 in annual savings that were rebated to affiliates to support member services.
- Assisted with annual audits and compliance obligations under federal labor and tax regulations.

### Talent, Professional Growth & Leadership Development

- Functioned as the organization's de facto HR executive, overseeing employee evaluation and professional-growth planning while redesigning the evaluation instrument to include qualitative and quantitative evidence, self-reflection, and goal setting.
- Organized and executed the first virtual biennial conference, including staff training, platform development, and live technical support.

### Policy, Advocacy & Education Leadership

- Launched the Labor Leadership Program, a 40-hour executive curriculum covering membership strategy, governance, education policy and economics, grievance handling, arbitration, and collective bargaining; the program was submitted for Act 45 credit in partnership with statewide stakeholders.
- Provided feedback to PDE during the redesign of the teacher-evaluation framework under Act 13 of 2020, contributing to the inclusion of diversity, equity, and instructional technology standards.

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### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STEM ACADEMIES, *School District of Philadelphia***

Jul 2019–Dec 2019

Held a district-level academic leadership role responsible for the design and implementation of an integrated STEM initiative across 12 pilot K–12 schools in a district serving more than 130,000 students.

- Engineered the creation of the STEM Academies Initiative, a multi-phase interdisciplinary model that established a districtwide blueprint for STEM curriculum and instruction.
- Served as Intermediate Unit 26's STEM point of contact and created a STEM Leadership Council to coordinate directives and reporting between PDE and Philadelphia-county LEAs.
- Secured a 10-year, \$10 million grant from GlaxoSmithKline, in partnership with the Philadelphia Education Fund, to implement advanced math, science, and engineering opportunities in pilot schools.

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### **ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, *Temple University College of Education & Human Development***

Aug 2019–Aug 2025

Taught graduate coursework in educational leadership and policy for educators pursuing principal and superintendent credentials, including Contexts for School Reform (school law), Policy & Practice in Urban Education (school leadership), Education Policy Analysis (policy application), and Introduction to Statistics and Research (quantitative research methodology).

### **RESEARCH ASSISTANT, *Temple University Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies***

Aug 2016–May 2019

Conducted advanced quantitative and mixed-methods research for the General Education Program, a university-wide academic program serving more than 30,000 undergraduates.

- Produced large-scale analyses on class size, grade inflation, pedagogy, and student outcomes using advanced statistical methods.
- Contributed to the evaluation of the General Education program for the university's Middle States reaccreditation process.

### **PRESIDENT, *Temple University Graduate Students Association (AFT Local #6290)***

Jun 2016–May 2018

Led a union representing 800+ graduate teaching and research employees and chaired the 2018-2022 contract negotiation team.

- Restructured affiliate finances, restored IRS nonprofit standing, and modernized member communications and engagement systems.
- Conducted extensive analysis of university fiscal and graduate operations to support a more data-driven bargaining process.

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## **SELECT PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

### Peer-Reviewed & Public Scholarship

Ake-Little, E., von der Embse, N., Dawson D. (2020). Does Class Size Matter in the University Setting? Examining the Effects of Student Demographics on Student Achievement. *Educational Researcher*, 49(8), 595-605

von der Embse, N., Kligus, S., Ake, E., Ecklund, K., Levi-Neilsen, S. (2018) Training Teachers to Facilitate Early ID of Mental and Behavioral Health Risk. *School Psychology Review*, 47(4).

Ake-Little, E. (2019). In Defense of Standardized Testing in College Admissions. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Print).

Ake-Little, E. (2019). Fixing a Liberal Arts Education Requires Standardization. *James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal* (Online).

Ake-Little, E. (2018). Closing the Loop Between K-12 and Higher Education Teaching & Learning. *Education Week* (Online).

Ake-Little, E. (2018). Why Asian-Americans in Teaching are Needed. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Print).

### Selected Presentations

- Ake-Little, E. (2022). *Understanding School Improvement Through STEM Colored Glasses*. Keynote Address at the 2022 PA Department of Education Data Summit. Harrisburg, PA.
- Ake-Little, E. (2022). *What's Standardized Testing Got to Do With It?* Presentation at the 2022 Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association Conference. Harrisburg, PA.
- Ake-Little, E. (2022). *Show Me the Money: A Deep Dive into Pay Transparency Across Generations*. Presentation to the SHRM Philly Chapter: 2022 Quarterly Series. (Online Webinar).
- Ake-Little, E. (2021). *Issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the (Science) Classroom*. Presentation for the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association Focus on Diversity Series. (Virtual Series).
- Ake-Little, E. (2021). *Labor Monopsony in Rural Pennsylvania and Its Implications for Teacher Turnover*. Presentation at the 111th National Education Finance Academy. (Virtual Conference).
- Ake-Little, E. (2020). *Labor Monopsony in Rural Pennsylvania and Its Implications for Teacher Turnover*. Presentation at the 112th National Forum to Advance Rural Education (Virtual Conference).
- Ake-Little, E. (2019). *Exploring the Relationship between Professional Development, Instructional Leadership, and Student Achievement Using District-wide Survey Data*. Presentation at the School District of Philadelphia Research, Policy, and Practice Conference. Philadelphia, PA.
- Ake-Little, E. (2019). *Demystifying STEM Education: The Link Between Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*. DKG Media: Education Admin Web Advisor. (Online Webinar).
- Ake-Little, E., Dawson, D. (2018). *Does Class Size Matter in the University Setting?* Presentation at the American Association of Colleges & Universities General Education Conference. Philadelphia, PA.
- Ake-Little, E. (2019, January). *Do Pedagogical Techniques Influence Students' Perceptions of Their Courses?* Presentation at the Lilly Conference on Evidence-Based Teaching & Learning in Higher Education. Austin, TX.

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## **EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT & DISTINCTIONS**

### Fellowships

- Urban Superintendents Academy, American Association of School Administrators–Howard University** 2022-2023  
Selective leadership-development fellowship for senior school administrators focused on the unique challenges of leading large, diverse urban school districts through intensive study of equity, governance, and strategic leadership.
- Collective Bargaining Certificate, AFT–Cornell University School of Industrial & Labor Relations** 2017-2019  
Advanced professional study in collective bargaining, contract negotiations, labor relations theory, and dispute-resolution strategy.
- Klingenstein Summer Institute for Early-Career Teachers, Columbia University Teachers College** 2015
- STEM Institute Fellow, Discovery Education–Siemens Foundation** 2014
- New Science Teacher Academy Fellow, National Science Teaching Association–DOW Chemical Company** 2013-2014

### Scholastic Awards

- Outstanding Dissertation Finalist Award, American Educational Research Association, Politics of Education Association** 2020
- Russell Conwell Scholarship, Temple University Beasley School of Law** (Merit-based 75% tuition award.) 2024–2028
- Opportunity Scholarship, GlaxoSmithKline** 2016–2019
- Margaret Wang Scholarship, Temple University College of Education & Human Development** 2016
- Biology Educator Leadership Scholarship, National Association of Biology Teachers** 2015
- Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation STEM Teacher Scholarship, AFCEA Educational Foundation** 2015
- Maitland P. Simmons Memorial Award for New Teachers, National Science Teaching Association** 2014
- Highly Qualified Regular & Special Educ. Teachers Scholarship, PA Department of Educ.** (Merit-based 100% tuition award.) 2011–2013
- Anthony J. Drexel Scholarship, Drexel University College of Arts & Sciences** (Merit-based 66% tuition award.) 2003–2006

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## **AFFILIATIONS & FIELD CONTRIBUTIONS**

### Select Professional Affiliations

- American / Pennsylvania / Philadelphia Bar Association 2024–Present
- American / Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators 2017–2025

### Selected Field Contributions

- At-Large State Representative, Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association** 2021–2023  
Member of the Executive Board and Steering Committee.
- STEM Teacher Diversity Mentor, Smithsonian Science Education Center** 2020–2021  
Advised the PDE on the statewide shortage of STEM teachers of color and contributed to the development of a multi-year pipeline plan.
- Reviewer, Teachers College Record** (Columbia University Teachers College). 2019–2022
- Reviewer, Journal of College Science Teaching** (National Science Teaching Association) 2014–2019
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