



## **Billings Public Schools announces Superintendent finalists**

Please join us on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 6 pm for a community forum featuring all three finalists. Lincoln Center Auditorium

*About the finalists (in alphabetical order):*



### **Dr. Erwin Garcia, Area Superintendent**

Dr. Erwin Garcia is a dynamic leader with a track record of transforming educational organizations into high-performing institutions. He currently serves as Area Superintendent in the Houston Independent School District. In his present position, Dr. Garcia serves 53 campuses and 24,000 students in the context of multicultural diversity, poverty, and academic challenges. Before his current role, Dr. Garcia was a principal supervisor under the title of School Support Officer. He also served as a principal, assistant principal, and teacher.

Most recently, under Dr. Garcia's leadership, 30 schools obtained an A rating and 120 combined Academic Distinctions per the Texas Education Agency. Many of Dr. Garcia's schools have received State and National recognition from the Children At-Risk Organization, The Houston

Chronicle, and the National Center for Urban School Transformation, NCUST. In his multiple roles and 16 years of service, Dr. Garcia has impacted change in a variety of school types, including Early Childhood Centers, Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, providing support to students in the context of various programs that include Special Education, ESL, GT, Vanguard, Magnet, Montessori, CTE, Fine Arts, International Baccalaureate, and bilingual education.

Dr. Garcia holds a doctorate in education from Houston Baptist University, a master's of education in bilingual/dual language from the University of St. Thomas, a master's in educational leadership from Lamar University, and a bachelor's in education from the *Corporación Universitaria Adventista de Colombia*.



## **Brenda Koch, M.Ed, K-12 Executive Director Billings Public Schools**

Brenda is a Montanan through and through. With deep agricultural roots and a passion for public education, she is completing her 28<sup>th</sup> year in education. Her career started in Laurel, MT and ended in Lewistown, MT after spending ten years teaching English and social studies (with experiences in high school and middle school) while also coaching high school volleyball for nine years. The last eighteen years have been serving as an administrator, beginning in 2005 as the Superintendent with Principal duties for the Elysian School district. In 2011, she became a K-12 Executive Director for Billings Public Schools, a position in which she still holds. Brenda is a graduate of Montana State University-Bozeman, and then received her MEd from Lesley College. She also completed her principal and superintendent certification from Montana State University-Bozeman. Brenda is a resident of Billings, MT and in her spare time if she isn't reading, you can find her outside – riding her horses, running, golfing, biking, or skiing – anything that allows her to enjoy the beauty of this beautiful state and community.



## **Thom Peck, Superintendent, Lewistown, MT**

Superintendent Peck was born and raised in Montana and he has been in education as a teacher, coach, building administrator and superintendent for 35 years in Washington State and Montana. He started his career as a biology and chemistry teacher, as well as, a football, basketball, and golf coach for 10 years in Washington State then returned to Montana to raise his family in 1996. He is currently in his 6th year as Lewistown Public Schools Superintendent. Prior to Lewistown, he was the Superintendent in Box Elder, MT and before that, the Superintendent in Charlo, MT. Peck graduated from Carroll College in Helena, MT in 1988 with a BA degree in Biology and Chemistry and went on to receive a MA degree in Educational Leadership from Seattle Pacific University in 1994, followed by a Superintendent Endorsement and doctoral program in Educational Leadership at the University of Montana in Missoula, MT in 2004.

Superintendent Peck currently serves as the President of Central Montana Association of School Superintendents. He is also a representative of the School Administrators of Montana Legislative Network and a member of the Delegate Assembly with the Coalition of Advocates for Montana Public Schools. Mr. Peck is a past scholarship recipient of the AASA National Conference and in 2018, he was a regional nominee for Montana School Superintendent of the Year. "Education is deeply personal to me" - I am the youngest of 5 children, both my parents were teachers and all four of my older sisters were educators in Montana, Wyoming, Washington, Alaska and even overseas. My oldest daughter is a math teacher and coach at Cheney High School in Cheney, WA and I have a nephew who is a middle school principal in Missoula, MT. My wife recently attained her Business Education Degree from the University of Montana - Western with the hopes of teaching business in a high school or middle school. Education seems to be in our DNA! My youngest daughter is an emergency room nurse at the UC - Denver Medical Center. I have one grandson, Kohen, who is almost 2 years old. Peck serves on the Central Montana Head Start Board, the Board for the Central Montana Foundation, the Board for the Central Montana Education Center and is a member of Kiwanis. I

LOVE watching kids feel success in school activities, it is like therapy! I enjoy the outdoors through golf, hiking, skiing and Native American Pow Wows.