

## Mary Elizabeth A. Davis, Ph.D.

To the Members of the Cherokee County Board of Education:

Twenty-three years ago, a message on my home answering machine announcing Science Teacher openings changed the trajectory of my life. I was a recent college graduate and I responded to that answering machine message by submitting an application for my first teaching position and a few months later, my very proud dad, a public school educator himself, drove me to that first job interview. This was not only my first teaching interview, but the first step I would take to becoming a life-long educator and a student-focused advocate for effective public schools for all children. Over two decades later, my career has taken me from the classroom to policy advisor, and to cabinet-level leadership roles within large, complex public school districts. The experiences I gained as a teacher and coach in my first years in education shaped my leadership and beliefs about the role public education plays in the lives of students, families, and communities. And now, it is with incredible excitement that I present myself for your consideration as the next Superintendent of the Cherokee County School District.

I never imagined I would leave my classroom at that very first school, but I felt compelled to address the gaping hole I saw between education policy development and the responsibility of practitioners to create an exceptional education for every child. To create a high-quality education system, we must bridge what happens in policy-development chambers in federal and state government with what is necessary for teachers to be effective in classrooms for students today. I realized the place where I could most effectively bridge that gap belonged in school system leadership. In 2011, I assumed the role of Assistant Superintendent of the 13th largest district in the nation, Gwinnett County Public Schools, followed by a role as Chief Academic Officer within Cobb County School District, the 24th largest district in the nation. In 2017, I became Superintendent of the Henry County Schools; the position I still hold today.

As an executive leader in two, large urban-suburban-rural districts in the metro-Atlanta region, one of which served 164,000 students and the other served 113,000 students to now the superintendent in a mid-size, urban-suburban-rural district serving 43,000 students in the same region, I have transformed district and school leadership responsibilities from that of management and oversight to the facilitation of the innovative and creative capital of the students, the workforce, and the community. Over the last decade, I have amassed significant expertise managing budgets totaling up to \$747 million and overseen teams of 6,000. I have worked with a diverse collection of community, district, classroom, and student leaders to redefine academics and remove barriers to student progress. I am a student-centered leader with a compelling track record of notable and scaled achievement gains on all academic metrics. I have successfully developed the trust necessary to lead communities of difference and have effectively developed student-focused and results-oriented unity in large, economically, ethnically, and culturally diverse counties.

I firmly believe that effective leadership for the Cherokee County School District is not found in one person alone, but in one person who can unite the many essential contributors necessary to build the future for this premier school system. Sustainable success is dependent on the effectiveness of teams, not the actions of one, and my leadership reflects that approach. I have a proven record of building effective governance teams, leading teams of leaders, and unifying large communities to shared commitments and unprecedented results. The results for students include historic achievement gains for all students—particularly in reading levels at every grade level, tremendous advances for students with disabilities, and significant improvements in access and

outcomes for African American and Hispanic students in advanced coursework. During my tenure as Henry County Schools Superintendent, our district has:

- Made 11.3 point gain on State Accountability Metrics (CCRPI) and was deemed the fastest improving district in metro-Atlanta
- Met 100% of state-determined student group performance targets (closing gap targets); for the first time in school system history; 36/52 schools made double digit gains on closing achievement gaps
  - 69.7 point increase in ES closing achievement gaps (compared to state performance change of -11.2)
  - 32.0 increase in MS closing achievement gaps (compared to state performance change of -28.8)
  - 45.8 point increase in HS closing achievement gaps (compared to state performance change of -10.0)
- Achieved double digit gains in 24/51 schools on State Accountability Metrics (CCRPI)
- Eliminated all “F” schools and established first “A” schools on Governor’s Report Card
- Improved Early Literacy: 17% more 3rd graders district wide reading on grade level in the fall of 2021 than when the cohort was in 1st grade in the fall of 2019

Although my work has taken me far from my very first classroom, the lessons I learned as a new teacher planted the seed for deep rooted beliefs about what’s possible when one keeps students at the center of every decision. People throughout every phase of my career would describe me then and now as someone who relentlessly pursues unwavering student-centered leadership and a deep belief that large, complex, and diverse communities can share common commitments to excellence in the education we provide for young people. As we come to the back-end of a world-wide global pandemic, every single school system will need architects to redesign what public education can be for kids. Cherokee will require a leader who can facilitate the shared hopes and aspirations of the community so that the next chapter is uniquely inspired by the voices of students, families, employees, and community members. I have a proven track record of doing this at scale, and the belief that we can position Cherokee as the nation’s leader to reset and reconstruct what is possible in public education.

Now, more than ever, school systems need unifiers. Finding common ground amongst stakeholders will require courageous individuals who can step in the middle of difference and bring people together. I can do that and have, time and time again. I am uniquely prepared to work in a constantly changing political environment while simultaneously influencing policy development at all levels of government on behalf of the students, teachers, and leaders of the Cherokee community.

I am energized by the prospect of serving in the Cherokee community. It is very meaningful today that I declare my intent to serve as your next Superintendent of Schools. This moment is full-circle for me in many ways; beyond presenting myself as a candidate, I come to Cherokee Schools as a parent, just like my father did 23 years ago as he supported me as I launched my career. When my family and I consider where to raise our young children, we care deeply about a highly engaged community and the caliber of schools. I would feel proud for my children to enroll in Cherokee County schools and to do my part to advance the legacy of exceptional education as I join your community.

I respectfully submit my candidacy for your review. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Mary Elizabeth A. Davis

## Mary Elizabeth A. Davis, Ph.D.

*Employing a relentless belief that every child can and will learn at or above grade level, working to ensure schools are the center of unifying a community, and that families and community partners feel welcomed and connected to the education of our youth.*

- Passionate educator with over two decades experience spanning roles as teacher, coach, and cabinet-level leadership within Fairfax County, Gwinnett County, Cobb County, and Henry County Schools.
- Superintendent of Henry County Schools since 2017, disrupting multiple years of declining school and student performance.
- Experienced fiscal and operations leader, who has managed budgets totaling up to \$747 million dollars and working with budgets totaling \$1.2 billion dollars.
- Extensive skill engaging with a wide breadth of stakeholders across functions and industries, from community partners and business leaders, to elected officials working at the highest levels of government.
- Finalist for Georgia's Superintendent of the Year (2023) and Awarded the President's Award by the Georgia State Superintendent's Association (2020) in recognition of facilitating alignment from the community to the boardroom to the classroom, resulting in extraordinary student performance gains and closing performance gaps.
- Awarded Georgia's large school systems Governance Team of the Year Finalist three consecutive years for the Board of Education's work in policy, strategic plan, and student achievement gains.

### EDUCATION

<b>Doctorate of Philosophy, Educational Policy Studies</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Specialist in Educational Leadership</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Masters in Public Administration</b>	<b>2005</b>
Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA	
<b>Bachelor of Science, Chemistry</b>	<b>1999</b>
<b>Certification in Secondary Education</b>	<b>1999</b>
Messiah College, Grantham, PA	

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

<b>HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS, McDonough, Georgia</b>	<b>November 2017 – Present</b>
<b>SUPERINTENDENT</b>	

*Chief Executive Officer for metro-Atlanta school system serving 43,000 students and 51 schools (54% FRL) in the 9<sup>th</sup> largest school system in the state of Georgia, 110<sup>th</sup> largest district in the country, budget totaling \$747 million.*

#### Educational Leadership

- Built and implemented processes for teaching and learning, including clarifying standards, balanced instructional models, comprehensive distribution of instructional resources, and student progress monitoring.
- Disrupted multiple years of declining school and district student performance in less than two years:
  - Achieved 11.3 point district performance gain on State Accountability System (CCRPI); +15.6 ES, +8.6 MS & +7.9 HS
  - Met 100% of state-determined student group performance targets (closing gap targets); and improvement of closing achievement gap targets by 69.7% ES, 32.0% MS; 45.8% HS
  - Special education achievement gap targets were all exceeded in ES, half showed growth in MS, and all showed growth in HS
  - Propelled 24 schools to double digit gains on State Accountability Metrics (CCRPI)
  - Eliminated "F" schools and established first "A" schools on Governor's Report Card
  - Mathematics State Assessment performance: 43% of schools showed double digit decrease in Level 1 (beginning level) performance; 7 schools showed >20% improvement in proficient and above performance
  - ELA State Assessment performance: 47% of schools showed double digit decrease in Level 1 (beginning level) performance; 4 schools showed >20% improvement in proficient and above performance
  - High School Graduation rate improved to 88% while academic standards were increasing

- Implemented a kindergarten literacy model resulting in significantly improved reading proficiency in 4 months, followed by a 3-5 literacy model pilot which immediately impacted students performing below grade level by an average of 25%
- Rebuilt the Code of Conduct that resulted in increasing the transparency and consistency of assigning consequences, elevating consequences based on community recommendations, decreased the number of appeals, and decreased the number of appeals overturned at the state agency level:
  - Implemented an OSS model that permitted students to serve OSS days (<10) at the alternate school to remain connected to one's learning and have access to intervention services.
  - Implemented a School of Scholars for K-5 students benefiting from an intense behavior-intervention learning environment to eliminate OSS for students in elementary school
- Established system of continuous improvement and facilitated external audit for instructional resources, multi-tiered system of supports, and a grade reporting task force, resulting in revised Board policies, procedures, and clarity about student progress.
- Addressed underperformance and underservice in special education through strategic staffing, improved instruction, enhanced parent engagement, and improved IEP development and monitoring practices.

### **Strategic Leadership**

- Transformed School Board from unrecognized to distinguished status (2020) and then exemplary status (2021, 2022), and Georgia's large system Governance Team of the Year finalist three years running (2020, 2021, 2023) by investing in Board of Education-Superintendent Governance Team, establishing core beliefs and commitments, a theory of action for change, organizational accountability, and comprehensive policy development and review to bring stability and improvement to the district.
- Convened stakeholder advisories that include students, teachers, principals, parents, classified personnel, faith-based leaders, community leaders, and elected officials.
- Facilitated the development of a one-stop-shop of resources for teachers now featured by the GA Department of Education and nationally recognized for the single-sign-on capabilities.
- Facilitated, constructed, and began implementation of a Community-Inspired Five-Year Strategic Plan that introduces a collection of strategic actions and community-designed accountability metrics to advance opportunities, access, and outcomes for all students.
  - Opportunities improved:
    - Established a STEM lab with STEM teacher in all 28 ES and a computer science course in all 11 MS resulting in all ES students having access to STEM, coding, and robotics.
    - Opened a first-ever Welcome Center and served 2,000 families new in the first 9 weeks of its opening
    - Expanded language services for students and families.
    - Implemented comprehensive school counseling model aligned to ASCA standards along with a College and Career Planning tool for all families.
    - Began chorus and theater programs in all ES and beginning the establishment of an orchestra and theater program in all MS and HS.
    - Acquired ERP to replace 40-year old legacy software systems for business and HR operations.
  - Performance Improvement based on Community-Developed Metrics includes:
    - Grew the percent of graduates eligible for full-tuition scholarships by 1%.
    - Grew the percent of students starting kindergarten, kindergarten-ready by 4%.
    - Increased the percent of students participating in PSAT and PSAT-8 assessments.
    - Increased the number of gifted-identified students.
    - Increased the number of students participating in ES advanced math, the number of MS students successfully completing a HS credit, and the number of HS students taking an AP.
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### **Human Capital**

- 99% of classrooms staffed on day 1 of school for 4 consecutive years, and 99.7% teacher retention rate in years 1-3.
- Collaborated with 2-year and 4-year colleges to redesign the teacher pipeline approach and launch a Community Innovation Campus for teacher, nurse and respiratory therapist, and EMT workforce development.

- Addressed decades of lagging teacher salaries with annual compensation lifts to the teacher salary schedule including most recently an 8% increase to restore competitive compensation for classroom teachers in the Atlanta region.
- Developed path for historic compensation improvements: starting salaries of <\$15/hour including a 17% increase for bus drivers.

#### **Finance & Operations**

- Created transparency in budget practices through community conversations and website presence.
- Addressed consecutive years of reserves-dependent budget planning and developed a balanced budget that overcame an initial \$22 million deficit during the first year.
- Passed a \$328M capital improvement referendum with a 68% voter approval rate in March 2021 in the same week that we launched a vaccination site serving 3,000 people, receiving a visit from the COGNIA accreditation agency, and offering in-person and remote learning options for family after recent COVID surges.
- During COVID-19, overcame a \$45M anticipated loss in revenue to eliminate expected dependency on reserves, instead paving path to restore the full fund balance and invest in the district's first ever capital savings account. Facilitated the early payment of \$51M of long-term debt during the pandemic saving taxpayers \$15M over the life of the bonds.
- Implemented a multi-year plan to improve campus security and student safety through community-led investments and improved practices. Invested in and implemented a crisis response system, single point of entry for all ES, MS, and HS campuses, a "see something, say something" campaign, and assessed perspectives of feeling safe at school.
- Built and opened 2 schools and 1 performing arts center; approaching design phase for 3 more schools.

#### **COVID-19 Management**

- Began remote instruction for all 43,000 students 72 hours after closing schools on March 13, 2020. Established curbside breakfast and lunch pick-up in 5 days and served 350,000 meals in the 10 weeks remaining in the school year.
- Open for on-campus learning for 85% of the 2020-21 school year. Maintained a flexible remote option for families for the entire 2020-21 school year.
- Developed & launched K-5 virtual evening academy in the 2020-21 school year, continuing during 2021-22 school year.
- Maintained access to athletics and performing arts throughout the pandemic.
- Open for on-campus learning 100% of the 2021-22 school year and grew a small 6-12 virtual school to a multi-option K-12 virtual, blended, and evening academy serving nearly 5,000 students.
- In March 2021 alone:
  - Authorized as the only district in the state of Georgia to offer a Closed Point of Distribution (POD) vaccination site that served all school district employees and private school and day care employees serving 3,000 people
  - Earned re-accreditation from COGNIA Accreditation Agency; eliminated all below the standard category scores; improved district ratings to 59 points above the national mean compared to the district rating 5 years prior that was well below the national mean.
  - Passed the capital projects referendum with 68% voter approval to fund 5 years of capital projects
- Mitigated learning loss exacerbated by the pandemic, as indicated by the following Performance Impact:
  - Increased Algebra 1 performance 8.1% higher than pre-pandemic performance. Several HS and MS posting double digit gains.
  - Increased from 12/40 ES and MS performing above the national average in mathematics in 2018 to 29/40 ES and MS performing above the national average in the winter of 2021
  - Increased 3/40 ES and MS performing above the national average in reading in 2018 to 25/40 ES and MS performing above the national average in the winter of 2021
  - 17% more 3<sup>rd</sup> graders district-wide in 2021-22 are reading at or above grade level than when this cohort was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade in 2019-20
  - Partnered with the Equity Lab to offer the first-ever Ivy League dual enrollment courses
- Featured in Ed Week, Fortune Magazine, NBC News Now, USA Today, & Atlanta Journal Constitution for approach to opening schools and keeping them open, and addressing the mental health and trauma needs of young people.
- Employed a Mental Health & Wellness Facilitator in every school and created a CARE team at every school, successfully making more than 3,000 family contacts at the start of the school year to bring students back to the school setting.



**COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, Marietta, Georgia****June 2013 – November 2017****CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**

*Executive Cabinet member who advanced the core business of teaching and learning for more than 113,000 students and 112 schools (45% FRL) in the second largest school system in the state of Georgia and 24<sup>th</sup> largest school system in the country. \$1.1 billion dollar budget*

- Significantly improved district performance on the state accountability metrics and outperformed the state average in student achievement, student progress, and closing the achievement gap categories.
  - Graduation rate increased 5.6% for all students (83.8% overall) between 2014 and 2017
  - AP Participation: 8% growth in all students, 11.2% growth for African American students
  - AP Passing Rates: 17% growth in African American and 19% growth in Hispanic students with a 3+ score
  - Increased dual enrollment participation more than 50% in two years
  - Outperformed the State average on Georgia Milestones in every content area (ES and MS grades)
  - Significant increase on Local Reading Proficiency metrics: 12% increase in advanced reading performance and 8% decrease in below basic reading performance from August to May
  - Significant increase on Local Mathematics Proficiency metrics: 14% increase in advanced math performance and 29% decrease in below basic math performance
  - Local Reading Intensive Instructional Model; 100% of schools demonstrated expected or accelerated growth
- Designed the District's Flexibility Model and negotiated waivers from state laws with the State Board of Education in exchange for a model of increased accountability monitored by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement.
- Led the review and evaluation of special education services and facilitated the design of data-driven processes to determine appropriate placement and services that aim to increase student independence PK through 21; and increased efficiency and effectiveness of funding for special education.
- Facilitated the design, development, and launch of the district's learning management system that integrates legacy systems and provides real-time access to professional learning, teaching resources, and student performance data (both current and historical) designed to transform into a personalized learning environment for all students.
- Initiated and facilitated the development and implementation of an intensive reading model; after two years of implementation, the average 1<sup>st</sup> grade Lexile was 29 points higher than prior to the early literacy roll-out.
- Initiated and facilitated the development and implementation of an early kindergarten model.

**GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, Suwanee, Georgia****October 2007 – May 2013****ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT – DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION, 2011 – 2013****DIRECTOR OF SCIENCE K-12, 2007 – 2011**

*Cabinet member who led and advanced teaching and learning for 164,000 students and 132 schools in the largest school district in the State of Georgia and 13<sup>th</sup> largest in the country. Budget totaling \$1.2 billion*

- Broad Prize-Winning District (2010) recognized specifically for closing the achievement gap and advancing student learning; 2009 (finalist) and 2010 (winner) interview team member, school site team member, and contributing writer.
- Designed and launched accelerated intervention model for over-age 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, supporting them to rejoin peers in 10<sup>th</sup> grade; first cohort in 2012 – 66% graduated on-time and 40% of graduates enrolled in post-secondary institutions.
- Developed a comprehensive targeted intervention model for underperforming schools by coordinating all instructional leaders to provide real-time, customized professional development based on performance data.
- Increased exceeds student performance in science by 10% or more in grades 3 – 8, and passing rate on the HSGT from 89% to 96%.
- Developed and supported accelerated science model in ES and MS to support increased access to AP science courses in HS, including HS physical science for all 8<sup>th</sup> graders, biology for all 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and physics for all students before graduating.

**ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Deputy Director, Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.****2006 – 2007**

*Managed a Department initiative designed to communicate federal education policy and provide professional development support to the K-12 education community.*

**Physics and Chemistry Teacher, Walton High School, Cobb County, Marietta, Georgia** 2005 – 2006  
*Students completed the state science competency exam with a 100% pass rate—87% scoring Level 3—compared to an approximately 52% state pass rate.*

**Education Policy Advisor, United States Senate, Washington, D.C.** 2002 – 2004  
*Advised Congress on education policy and contributed to education legislation.*

**Chemistry Teacher, Hayfield Secondary School, Fairfax County Public Schools, Alexandria, Virginia** 1999 – 2002  
*Students completed state chemistry competency exam with a 98% pass rate compared to a 68% state pass rate.*

#### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

<b>Finalist, Georgia Superintendent of the Year</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Finalist, Georgia Governance Team of the Year</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Awarded Billy Carter Public Service Award, Henry County</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Awarded Golden Eagle Award, Boy Scouts of America</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Member, Chiefs for Change</b>	<b>2020 – Present</b>
<b>Member, Governor's Superintendent Advisory</b>	<b>2020 – Present</b>
<b>New Superintendent Mentor &amp; Trainer (Governance + Systems Design), Georgia State Superintendent's Association</b>	<b>2020 – Present</b>
<b>Awarded Georgia Superintendent's Association President's Award</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Board Member, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta</b>	<b>2017 – Present</b>
<b>Board Member, Henry County Chamber of Commerce</b>	<b>2017 – Present</b>
<b>Board Member, Georgia Department of Public Health, District 4</b>	<b>2017 – Present</b>
<b>Member &amp; Treasurer, Georgia Education Coalition</b>	<b>2017 – Present</b>
<b>Member, Georgia School Board Association</b>	<b>2017 – Present</b>
<b>Board Member &amp; Past Chair, Griffin Regional Education System (South Atlanta)</b>	<b>2017 – Present</b>
<b>Graduate, National Broad Superintendent Academy</b>	<b>2016</b>

# Mary Elizabeth Davis

• **Personal Information**

You **may not** contact my current employer.

I am available for employment after **3/1/2024**.

Current Base Salary **\$338,000**

Indicate how you prefer to be contacted confidentially: **Mobile Phone**

2. **Address**

United States

United States

3. **Education History**

**Georgia State University**

Attended from 2012 to 2016

Graduated: **Yes**

Course:

Degree: **Doctorate of Philosophy**

Major Area of Study or Concentration

**Education Policy**

Minor Area of Study or Concentration

**Social Foundations**

Date Degree Awarded/Expected or if currently or formerly enrolled provide last date applicable **2016-05-15**

**Georgia State University**

Attended from 2009 to 2011

Graduated: **Yes**

Course:

Degree: **Specialist**

Major Area of Study or Concentration

**Educational Leadership**

Minor Area of Study or Concentration

**District Administration**

Date Degree Awarded/Expected or if currently or formerly enrolled provide last date applicable **2011-05-15**

**Georgia State University**

Attended from 2004 to 2005

Graduated: **Yes**

Course:

Degree: **Masters**

Major Area of Study or Concentration

**Public Administration**

Minor Area of Study or Concentration

**Constituent Services**

Date Degree Awarded/Expected or if currently or formerly enrolled provide last date applicable **2005-12-08**

**Messiah College**

Attended from 1995 to 1999

Graduated: **Yes**

Course:

Degree: **Bachelor of Science**

Major Area of Study or Concentration

**Chemistry**

Minor Area of Study or Concentration

**Secondary Education**

Date Degree Awarded/Expected or if currently or formerly enrolled provide last date applicable **1999-05-10**

4. **Employment History**



**Henry County Schools***Superintendent*

From 11/7/2017 to Present

Reason for leaving: Currently serving in Henry County.

Supervisor Name:	<b>Henry County Board of Education</b>
Annual Salary	<b>\$338,000</b>
Check here if we may contact this employer	<b>No</b>
Select one	<b>Full-time position</b>
Key Responsibilities	<b>Chief Executive Officer for metro-Atlanta school system serving 43,000 students and 51 schools (54% FRL) in the 9th largest school system in the state of Georgia, 110th largest district in the country, budget totaling \$747 million.</b>
Key Accomplishments	<b>Turned around multiple years of declining student achievement with an 11-point gain on CCRPI, meeting 100% of state-identified achievement gap targets, and increased graduation rate.</b>
Number of Persons Supervised	<b>6000</b>
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	<b>\$747M</b>

**Cobb County School District***Chief Academic Officer*

From 6/1/2013 to 11/6/2017

Reason for leaving: Appointed Superintendent in Henry County Schools

Supervisor Name:	<b>Chris Ragsdale</b>
Annual Salary	<b>\$140,000</b>
Check here if we may contact this employer	<b>No</b>
Key Responsibilities	<b>Executive Cabinet member who advanced the core business of teaching and learning for more than 113,000 students and 112 schools (45% FRL) in the second largest school system in the state of Georgia and 24th largest school system in the country. \$1.1 billion dollar budget</b>
Key Accomplishments	<b>Significantly improved district performance on the state accountability metrics and outperformed the state average in student achievement, student progress, and closing the achievement gap categories.</b>
Number of Persons Supervised	<b>300</b>
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	<b>\$30M</b>

**Gwinnett County Public Schools***Assistant Superintendent Curriculum & Instruction*

From 5/1/2011 to 6/1/2013

Reason for leaving: Advancement Opportunity in Cobb County School District.

Supervisor Name:	<b>Dale Robinson</b>
Annual Salary	<b>\$125,000</b>
Check here if we may contact this employer	<b>No</b>
Select one	<b>Full-time position</b>
Key Responsibilities	<b>Cabinet member who led and advanced teaching and learning for 164,000 students and 132 schools in the largest school district in the State of Georgia and 13th largest in the country. Budget totaling \$1.2 billion</b>
Key Accomplishments	<b>Broad Prize-Winning District (2010) recognized specifically for closing the achievement gap and advancing student learning; 2009 (finalist) and 2010 (winner) interview team member, school site team member, and contributing writer.</b>
Number of Persons Supervised	<b>50</b>
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	<b>\$50M</b>

**Gwinnett County Public Schools***Director of Science*

From 10/1/2007 to 5/1/2011

Reason for leaving: Promoted within the organization to Assistant Superintendent.

Supervisor Name:	<b>Jean Walker</b>
Annual Salary	<b>\$113,000</b>
Check here if we may contact this employer	<b>No</b>
Select one	<b>Full-time position</b>
Key Responsibilities	<b>Responsible for the K-12 science program from standards to lesson plans to equipment and resources and outcomes for students in science.</b>
Key Accomplishments	<b>Developed and supported accelerated science model in ES and MS to support increased access to AP science courses in HS, including HS physical science for all 8th graders, biology for all 9th graders, and physics for all students before graduating.</b>
Number of Persons Supervised	<b>3</b>
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	<b>\$10M</b>

5. **References**

**Keith Porter**, Colleague

Years Known    **15**  
Organization    **Georgia School Superintendent Association**  
Current Position **Professional Development Director**  
  
Address

**Stephanie Gordy**, Executive Director for Region Districts

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)  
Years Known    **7**  
Organization    **Griffin Regional Educational Agency**  
Current Position **Executive Director**  
  
Address

**Samantha Fuhrey**, Colleague

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)  
Years Known    **7**  
Organization    **University of West Georgia**  
Current Position **Faculty (Former Superintendent)**  
  
Address

6. **Files**

7. **Certifications**

Other: 697736

L-7 certificate is current and valid

8. **Additional Information**

**Honors and Awards**

Finalist, Superintendent of the Year (Georgia)  
Finalist, Large System Governance Team of the Year (Georgia)  
Billy Carter Public Service Award, Henry County  
Golden Eagle Award, Boy Scouts of America

**Interests, Hobbies, Special Talents**

Coaching Youth Sports Programs (Softball, Basketball)

**Community Outreach**

Member, Henry County Kiwanis Club  
Board Member, Henry County Chamber of Commerce  
Board Member, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta  
Board Member, Georgia Department of Public Health  
Board Member and Officer, Georgia Education Coalition

9. **Other Training**

Institution, Program or Trainer/Consultant Providing Training  
Georgia School Boards Association  
Training Location

McDonough, GA  
United States

Duration of Training  
Multiple 3 hour sessions over several Whole Board Trainnig Dates  
Date  
Wed, 07/12/2023 - 12:00

Institution, Program or Trainer/Consultant Providing Training  
Georgia School Superintendent's Annual Meeting  
Training Location

Athens, GA  
United States

Duration of Training  
Twice Annually for 2 full days  
Date  
Wed, 10/18/2023 - 12:00

10. **Application Questions**

When are you available to start this position? 2024-03-01  
Indicators

INDICATOR 1: EDUCATION,  
TRAINING AND LICENSURE:  
Describe the qualities of an  
effective superintendent and  
explain how your preparation has  
prepared you to meet  
expectations in each of the  
qualities you have identified.

The role of the superintendent is to facilitate the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the community in which the school district is designed to serve. An effective superintendent is skilled at deeply engaging with community and then translating the priorities of the community into the work of the governance team and the actions of the district to continue to advance and improve based on the values of families, school leaders, teachers, staff, students, and community members. Having served as a superintendent for six years, I have seen first-hand the irreplaceable value of leading the district while grounding the direction squarely in the shared perspectives of stakeholders. I was appointed at a time when the community was experiencing rapid growth; and that growth was coupled with rapidly declining student performance. Community dissatisfaction was mounting in 2017 and it was clear that millions of different ideas on how to move the district forward and grow student outcomes were catalytically competing for attention. After a very disciplined and methodical series of activities, I was able to slowly extract common themes from the from the many competing ideas. These common themes were thoughtfully developed to honor the hopes dreams and aspirations of the community. I was then able to position the governance team to consider their key actions to capitalize on these themes and focus the organization through board policy, the superintendent's evaluation, and ultimately a clear strategic plan with community-inspired metrics of success. The qualities that this approach requires includes dedication to community engagement, belief in the power of boards of education and the role of the board in improvement, and skills in system design and alignment to decrease variability and improve reliability of operational and academic results. I have a track record continuous and meaningful community engagement where stakeholders report feeling not just heard but integral to solutions. This is evident in the current community-inspired strategic plan and community-inspired metrics of success that demonstrate how I am committed to building the future of schools alongside the community. My dedication to board governance and relentless investment to foster highly valued and essential work with and through the board of education—particularly in policy, local accountability, strategic plan, and resource allocation—has led to the current board I serve being nominated for Governance Team of the Year three times running. While serving as superintendent, the board has authored 10 core policies that have changed the conditions for learning in Henry County Schools and resulted directly in an 11- point jump on the CCRPI and removed all failing schools from the Governor's Failing Schools list. Finally, the alignment from the community to the board room to the classroom is only possible with high attention to the systems throughout the organization that ensure synchronization and coordination across the organization in order to amplify the effectiveness of school leadership and foster improved outcomes for students. An effective superintendent is cognizant of the prominent role of the community, families, staff, and students in contributing to the direction of the district and the goals that capture success. If given the opportunity to serve in Cherokee County School District, I am prepared to bring by dedication to community engagement, my belief in the essential and vital role of boards and the actions taken by the governance team, and my eye for system design and improvement in order to grow academic outcomes and operational efficiency to the next level of performance as we lead the state and nation in proving what is possible in public education today when the community, board room, and classroom are tightly aligned.

**INDICATOR 2: EXPERIENCE -**  
Share your experience serving in leadership roles at principal level or above in a district like ours. Based on what you know about our district, what have you learned from those experiences that might be applicable to a district like ours?

Serving at leadership levels in large, complex, and growing communities over the past 20 years has given me a depth of experience that will be valuable if I am able to join the Cherokee County community. I have served at the Cabinet and Executive Cabinet level in Gwinnett County Public Schools and the Cobb County School District and in both instances was responsible for building academic systems that improve learning outcomes for all students, engaging with teachers and leaders to structure impactful resources and training, and connecting with the community on the overall strategy for the district to advance. Currently I serve as Superintendent of Schools in Henry County, Georgia, serving almost 44,000 students—nearly the same student population as Cherokee. What I have learned as superintendent in Henry County will serve as a guide to my approach serving in Cherokee County. I have learned that families and community members care deeply about their schools and the promise of a high-quality education; and that it is my responsibility, as superintendent, to fully understand where common objectives are shared among all sectors of stakeholders to inform an ambitious path forward that everyone can champion. I am prepared to bring a posture of listening to fully understand before constructing solutions that lead to all students reaching their potential. I have also learned the value and essential role of a high performing governance team. I have built structures to ensure every board member is fully informed of the events of the district, thoroughly prepared for the business of the board, and is constantly updated when incidents occur. I also dedicate substantial time to strengthening the key levers of governance and have experience working with a board of education to mobilize the role of policy-making, to set clear community-inspired metrics of success for local accountability, and build a long-range strategic plan. Governance requires purposeful investment in order to mitigate confusion in a community of schools and elevate the practices of excellence for every student, in every classroom, in every school across the district. I approach the opportunity to serve in Cherokee county with a unique skill set and belief system about the role of superintendents today. My conviction about effective governance coupled with a track record of continuous community engagement that together has led to remarkable results for student learning and improved operational efficiencies has prepared me to build on the legacy of excellence and elevate performance even further for the next chapter of the Cherokee County School District.

**INDICATOR 3: VISION, MISSION AND BELIEFS -** Share your strategy for securing partnerships (community organizations, vendors, professional organizations, etc.) for supporting and implementing the mission, vision and core values of the district.

A community is best served when there are high levels of coordination among all agencies and as superintendent, I see that as a key starting point as partnerships are formed. Currently, I work closely with the County Manager, CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, CEO of the Hospital, and Executive Director of Economic Development for the county. This model of interagency coordination has proven effective as we navigate rapid growth as a county. We have tackled issues such as youth safety and wellness, the need for a stronger STEM-ready workforce, and we have created unique partnerships designed to connect young people back into the workforce at home. Beyond this essential partnership, I see the superintendent's role as essential in building strong partnerships in the faith-based community, non-profit sector, business environment, and civic agencies. I have two strategies for amplifying the partnerships designed to secure partnerships for supporting and implementing the mission, vision, and core values of the district. The first, is to personally initiate and engage with a wide-variety of organizations across the community. While that remains regular and on-going, from that I form multiple advisory groups. In my early years as superintendent, I had a total of 13 advisory groups ranging from students to parents to business leaders to clergy to non-profit directors. Those 13 advisories have evolved over-time to more topic focused advisories. For example, as we seek to design and build a premier STEM high school, we have activated as STEM advisory that has remained intact for multiple years as the focus areas of study are formed and the unique academic experience is developed. I have evolved what was once an advisory comprised of parents of students served in special education to what is now an on-going solution-oriented advisory of special education parents who meet regularly with my team to provide insights and solutions. The most important attribute of personal engagement outwardly and the on-going insights provided through advisories is the ability to explicitly link and credit solutions and improvements to the direct work of those individuals that have contributed. The second strategy is redefining Partners in Education and having consistent commitments for each school's engagement with formalizing Partners. In Henry County we are currently re-designing Partners in Education to include volunteering, mentoring, and financial support. Historically, great value has been placed on financial support, but I believe that there is an opportunity to ensure volunteers and mentors are honored as essential to the mission of supporting young people. I also believe that the three broader categories of Partners in Education nurtures great experiences for more people with the school, staff, and students and in turn produces stronger allies to the mission of the school district. Schools are central to community life and embracing partners as part of the culture to advancing and improving as a school district is a top responsibility. I look forward to better understanding the current successful strategies that are deployed and elevating our commitment to ensuring partners find their place to support young people and our schools.

INDICATOR 4: ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROFESSIONALISM - What will be your strategy for advocating and proposing policies and procedures that promote the ethical behavior of all district personnel?

As professionals in public education, we are expected to act and operate with honor and integrity. In the state of Georgia, all educators have committed to the Code of Ethics for Educators which outlines the expected professional behavior for those working with young people and schools. As superintendent, I intend to honor the Code of Ethics and expect all employees to do the same. When there is a report of an incident that violates the Code of Ethics, I would expect a consistent process to be followed to investigate and then determine the validity of the report. In instances when the Code of Ethics is violated, appropriate personnel action is required. In my current role as superintendent, I have aimed to increase the consistency of practice in the handling of incident reports regarding employee behavior. I recommended the addition of an investigation team to increase the consistency of practice from incident to incident. We take every report of employee misconduct seriously and if the investigation ever reveals that an employee acted in conflict with any policy or the Code of Ethics then we are prepared to take the appropriate employment actions. Setting clear expectations for professionalism in public education and having up-to-date policies in place is important. Equally important is the consistent approach to investigating employee concerns and, although rare, applying appropriate accountability when employee misconduct does occur.

INDICATOR 5: EQUITY - What do you value most: focusing on improving student academic and social outcomes or preparing students to be productive in a diversity global society? Defend your position.

The core business of school districts is student learning and improving academic outcomes is my top priority as a leader in public education in Georgia. Academic outcomes are a measurement—or an indicator—of what students have learned compared to the academic standards of a specific grade or content area. Parents place trust in school professionals that their child is learning the knowledge and skills that the grade level or content area prescribes. Parents are also counting on the professionals in this field to deploy the most effective tools, techniques, strategies, and resources. I have tremendous confidence in teachers and believe that teachers, leaders, and support staff combined have a central focus on student learning. The role of the board of education and the superintendent in a school system is to create the conditions necessary so that every teacher's effectiveness is amplified every day. Through policy, the board of education creates the conditions for what teachers teach and what students learn, how resources are acquired and allocated from classroom to classroom, the role of student progress monitoring and academic reporting to families. Through clear goals and the evaluation of the superintendent, the board of education makes outcomes a clear priority. The superintendent is then responsible for designing the systems and processes to ensure the board's policy is honored and the tools and techniques are in place in order to meet the student learning objectives. The question asked which is more important, improving academic and social outcomes or preparing students to be productive in a diverse global society? I believe that if schools stay focused on a high-quality education that produces reliable outcomes for students, then graduates will be prepared to be productive in their future. Preparation for the future requires students first demonstrate academic success at each grade beginning in kindergarten.

INDICATOR 6: CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT - Share what you consider to be the most critical data needed for consistently and effectively guiding instruction.

The most important data to guide instruction is regular formative assessment data in the hands of teachers and school leaders to make real-time re-teaching decisions, strategically group students during instruction, and provide immediate interventions when needed. Research has shown that clarity about standards taught at a common pace across classrooms within the grade level and consistent student progress monitoring through common formative classroom assessments gives teachers the most insight into student learning on an ongoing basis. As superintendent I began during a time when student performance was on the decline and there was little consistency from classroom to classroom throughout the organization. The Board of Education was dismayed by the results, and they were feeling the frustration of the community grow. The earliest work that was done in my tenure began with Board policy to create an Aligned System of Teaching and Learning. The board first studied policies from across the country to determine how high-performing school districts were grounding the practices of teaching and learning in policy. Board members began to resonate with some of the policy language found in other districts and started the process of customizing that language into a policy for Henry County. A team of staff members also compiled a literature review of high-performing districts to illuminate the best practices in improving student and school performance. The Aligned System of Teaching and Learning for Henry County Schools emerged as a policy and clarified what teachers teach, defined a balanced instructional model as the approach to teacher, provided a commitment to acquire and allocate resources aligned to standards, and to introduce a system of student progress monitoring so that we could know that students are learning at grade level. Just one year later, the district jumped 11 points on the CCRPI and all failing schools were removed from the failing schools list. I have a track record of improving student performance and building systems for teaching and learning that support the teacher and provide for them the tools and resources necessary to be effective for every student. If able to join the Cherokee County team, I will be laser focused on learning outcomes for students and ensuring the gaps that exist between the performance of student groups and the districts' overall performance is closed at high levels.



INDICATOR 7: COMMUNITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS - What will be your strategy for building and maintaining safe, caring and healthy environments across schools in the district that meet the needs of each student and encourages them to be active, responsible and productive members of their community?

School safety is a top priority in education today. I have experience building a comprehensive safety and security strategy that is centered around three pillars. Pillar 1 is Campus Infrastructure. We have currently invested in \$33M since 2018 (about \$125K per school per year) to improve the overall campus structure. This includes constructing a single-point of entry at every school entrance, installing a secure buzzer access system, integrating a campus alert system into every school, increasing cameras and adding a real-time monitoring of the exterior doors of the cameras. Each of these investments are a direct reflection of the multiple community conversations that I have facilitated to garner the recommendations and priorities of our students, staff, families, and community members starting in 2018. Regularly, we have these forums that provide an update and then shift into sessions to hear improvement ideas from our stakeholders. Since 2018, we organize all of the insights provided into themes, prioritize those themes and then determine no cost, some cost, and investment criteria around each recommendation. Each year this collection of insights has served as a roadmap for our campus improvement efforts. Pillar 2 is safety practices and routines. This work focuses on quality drills, clear communication to families, and prevention and intervention strategies. We have created a Safety Toolkit for families in order to improve the clarity of our preparation for families and we have facilitated readiness exercises with our law enforcement partners. All of these efforts are scheduled, monitored, trained for the organization. Today, schools have a daily safety checklist that they use to monitor the appropriate application of all safety protocols as a priority. Pillar 3 is Conduct Expectations. The Board of Education in Henry took a stronger position on the expectations for behavior of students in three key areas. The training for staff to uphold the Board's Code of Conduct and the effort to maintain high expectations for student conduct has been a focus as we emerge from the disruptions brought on by COVID. If serving as superintendent in Cherokee County, I can assure you that I will continue to keep safety and security of students top of mind and focus in our work. I will be relentless in my assessment of our campus security, work daily with our School Resource Officer Division, and monitor for the effective use and application of our safety protocols. I will also include safety and security as a key question as I enter a new school community so I can hear from students, staff, families, and the community where they see opportunities to continue to get better. In addition to the attention to school safety, schools and school districts have increasingly become central to the community to meet the growing health and wellness needs of youth today. The statistics regarding youth wellness are quite startling today and access to social media and mature content is contributing to overall increase in risky behaviors among young children. Schools are designed to be a place where every student feels valued and welcomed and I currently use a periodic HenryCares check-in to proactively ask students key questions about their support structure. We ask do you have an adult at home to help you if you need it, do you have a friend at school, and do you have an adult at school that you can talk to. If a student answers no to all three questions, we have a proactive intervention that includes a daily check-in with a designated mentor (or caring adult) in the school setting. This simple strategy of checking in with students with a key set of questions has provided a path for so many students to establish a safe and healthy relationship that otherwise would be left to chance. The overall effort to ensure as a district that we meet the needs of each student and encourages them to be active, responsible, and productive members of the community will start with the Governance Team defining each of the attributes and then working with the community to facilitate recommendations on the ideal grade level outcomes for students associated with each attribute. From community insight we can better structure the activities at each level that will build prepared students for the future.

INDICATOR 8: PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF DISTRICT PERSONNEL - What will be your overarching position relative to hiring and retaining the most highly effective teachers and leaders for the district?

My aim as a superintendent today would transfer to my aim if serving as superintendent in Cherokee: to be the best possible place for teachers to teach, leaders to lead, and support professionals to serve. I have highly valued the role of my advisories as a superintendent and have had a unique teacher, leader, and support staff advisory (3 among 13 total advisories) each year. While the advisories are continuously assembled and are incorporated into the design of solutions for timely matters at hand, I have also maintained the focal question, "What do we need to do more of or less of to be the best place for teachers to teach (or leaders to lead or support professionals to serve...depending on the audience)?" This question has driven to so many innovative improvements as an employer. We changed our timeline for issuing contracts for employees, we now adopt our budget one month ahead of time, so salary improvements are known before the school year ends, we now pay a scholarship to TAPP teachers to cover their program costs, and we have created a K-12 future teachers program that is re-igniting so much excitement. I believe in public education, and I believe in the extraordinary impact of public educators today. I lead in a way that has high expectations for our workforce and high praise for the daily success on display across professions in this field.

INDICATOR 9: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR DISTRICT STAFF - Describe what is meant by supportive workplace conditions. Be specific about the conditions for promoting professional learning, collaborative practice, and mutual accountability for advancing student learning and socio-emotional well-being

The role of district support staff is to ensure the synchronization and coordination for supports and services in order to ensure that principals can be effective leading schools and school improvement. Supportive workplace conditions start with clarity around the organization's goals and the role each person or department of people play in reaching the organization's goals. I currently organize the work of district teams to be in alignment with the direction established by the governance team. Each division structures their workflow using operational management plans and I am able to monitor productivity and provide regular feedback and ensure coordination. This strategy of organizing the work of the district decreases the feeling of chaos and also minimizes the "extra" and "sudden" projects that get layered on top of already very full plates. A supportive workplace environment creates the value of the work and the contributors to the work and honors and celebrates employees along the way. I subscribe to the Patrick Lencioni work regarding the first team concept. The first team concept creates tight expectations around the inter-department shared ownership of work and results of the work. A high functioning district team does not permit any work to be done in silos nor does it position any crisis to be felt alone by only one team member. The first team understands the work of the organization and looks for the intersections and connection points to create orderly solutions that are sustainable and measured by clear results. Finally, accountability in an organization begins with the accountability of the superintendent. The current Blueprint guiding the work of the Cherokee County School District includes very clear metrics designed to measure success. The first step is to apply the appropriate structure of accountability to the superintendent's evaluation. Over time, the metrics serve as a guiding light to build a performance culture and a local accountability system that cascades from the superintendent's evaluation. I have experience working with my current governance team to craft an Organizational Accountability policy and to elevate the role of performance improvement in my evaluation. The evaluation instrument then authorizes the superintendent to begin the development of clear paths to attaining goals for student outcomes and student health and wellness. I consider local accountability metrics to be the measures inspired by the community on how stakeholders believe success is best understood and communicated.

INDICATOR 10: MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY - What are some things you will do as superintendent to maintain a positive presence in the district community and engage regularly in two-way communications about the district and its students?

As superintendent in Cherokee County I will be present and involved in every facet of community life. As I am now, I will continue to be involved in civic organizations, and will build profound partnerships with county, city, and agency officials in order to promote coordination as we serve families in Cherokee together. I will also be present in a faith-based community while you will also find me on the sidelines coaching my children's recreational sports teams. My informal engagement in the community will be coupled with a formal engagement with families and the community. I have already mentioned this, but I believe that schools are designed to fulfill the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the community in which they reside. It is my commitment to actively seek insights from all stakeholders through community forums, advisories, visiting with local school councils and faculties, town halls, visiting civic groups, and ultimately being comprehensively involved in the community. I listen intently, I take notes, and I aim to remember people's experiences and their suggestions. I then artfully weave common themes into recommendations that inform our direction forward.

INDICATOR 11: OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT - When considering whether or not you would apply for the Superintendent position in this district, what did you consider to be the expectations of the board (governing body)? How do you know that your skills and experiences are a good match for the needs, context and expectations of this district? What will be the keys for fostering a positive relationship with the board?

The Cherokee County Board of Education is reigning Governance Team of the Year and an exemplar to districts across the state and the country. Based on the history of excellence I expect that the Board of Education is seeking a candidate that will have the skills to build on the strong foundation and have an ambitious outlook for the ways to continue to improve. I have a depth of experience working with boards of education. In my current role, I have worked with the governance team to define our governance framework (we call Unified Governance) and to author together the constructs of that framework. I am committed to the governance team's work being highly valuable and highly valued. Some of the keys to fostering a positive relationship with the board will start on day one with establishing open and clear communication expectations with one another that I will be prepared to honor. I have built systems and processes for board preparation, incident communication, and board member support that quickly fosters trust and confidence. I know that I have much to learn about the county, the school district, the schools, and the board of education but I can assure you that I will be an eager student to learn all that I can and then work directly with the governance team to build the future of the Cherokee County School District together.

INDICATOR 12: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - What systems must be in place for promoting coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of district organization, programs, and services?

Alignment from the board room to the classroom cannot be left to chance. The structures that I utilize to ensure alignment and promote coherence among improvement efforts starts with a planning tool called operational management plans for district departments and school improvement plans for schools. Preparation for a school year begins in October and follows a disciplined schedule of development through until March. The schedule moves from ideation to cross-divisional coordination and commitment to assignment of resources (through budget process) to identifying key deliverables scheduled well in advance. All new things that will impact schools (the following year), along with all summer activities and professional development, need to be known, approved, and connected to likely funding by April 1st each year. From the development of operational management plans comes school improvement plans as school administrative teams prepare to lead organizational initiatives uniquely in each school community. Schools are able to determine what summer activities could be leveraged in their unique school improvement plan and how to begin conceptualizing the new year kick-off priorities. There is also time dedicated to determining cluster (feeder pattern) improvement plans. Once operational management plans and school improvement plans are in place, it is reasonable to predict the annual board meeting agenda items, leadership meeting topics, and on-going professional development. As a proponent of effective governance, all of this work to manage the organization with clear systems of planning, monitoring, and improvement is only possible once the board of education has established clear improvement goals, metrics of success, and has updated policies that guide the priorities of the district. My experience in aligning the board room to the classroom has resulted in students learning more, schools improving outcomes for all young people, and community confidence growing exponentially. If given the opportunity to lead in Cherokee County, I look forward to understanding the current structures in place to promote board room to classroom alignment and the cadence of planning for improvement so that we can continue to refine and grow as a district.

INDICATOR 13: LEADERSHIP PERSONAL QUALITIES: COMMUNICATION - Provide the key points that you will expect district staff to communicate to students, staff and other stakeholders concerning the priority for school improvement in the district.

If given the opportunity to serve in Cherokee County, I will bring an enthusiasm for student learning and a belief in every single young person that will serve as our unifying commitment for what we can do together through public education. It will be important that the culture of deep care for our work, deep care for our employees, deep care for our students, and deep care for our families and community be a shared attribute through which every district staff member approach their work and communicate more broadly. Our care for students and conviction about the options they have upon graduation will motivate the inspiring, optimistic direction led by professionals who serve in district leadership roles. I serve with an unapologetic belief in the capability of youth today and I would expect that the district leadership team would be eager to build systems, structures, and beliefs around kids learning more on our watch than they could anywhere else.

INDICATOR 13: LEADERSHIP PERSONAL QUALITIES: PERSONAL ETHICS AND VALUES - What is the key driver of your personal value system? How important is it that your value system is a match with the values of the district and community where you expect to serve as Superintendent?

My personal values are grounded in my faith, my love for my family, and my commitment to excellence in everything I do. My faith, my family, and my commitment to excellence drives my professional conviction that all kids can learn at or above grade level and on my watch will have an equal opportunity to do so. The opportunity to join the Cherokee County School District would also be an opportunity for my family to serve the community and model the integral role that schools play in unifying a community around excellence for the future generation. The appointment of a superintendent is significant for any community, and I understand that it is all about fit for the community and evidence of effective skills to do the job that the community needs next. You will find that my track record of excellence, my belief in young people, my results-oriented experience, and my skills in growing governance while further aligning a community of schools will exemplify both the fit around Cherokee's values and the evidence of the skills necessary for this next season of work in this community.

INDICATOR 13: LEADERSHIP  
PERSONAL QUALITIES:  
RESULTS ORIENTED - What will be some tools you will use to target and track student learning goals? What strategies will you employ if you see that some of the expected goals cannot be accomplished within the established timeframe?

Clear student goals established by the Board of Education is the first step to align the entire organization around ambitious outcomes for students. I can see that the Blueprint for Cherokee has launched clear metrics, and I am assuming clear goals for each metric have been set. These Blueprint metrics serve as the catalyst for (1) establishing key performance indicators (KPIs); (2) school improvement goals; and (3) alignment for the superintendent evaluation and division-head evaluations to promote clarity and shared accountability for results. Goals for district-wide outcomes can be further customized for school-specific goals that anchor improvement efforts. As superintendent, I would then utilize formative indicators such as enrollment counts, commons assessments, and reading proficiency diagnostics coupled to inform readiness for improvement. I would be prepared to couple that work with the role of principal supervisors engaging in regular school visits to coach around the strategies to achieve improved outcomes. Building a performance culture focused on all students requires clarity starting in the board room and alignment throughout the organization. Accountability for outcomes is not designed to change people when goals are not met, but instead for professionals to change strategies and techniques that result in achieving more for more students. When performance outcomes are not met, we need to evaluate our systems, our training, resources, strategies, and distractions (interruptions to instruction) that require adjustments. I am excited by the prospect of building on the legacy of excellence in Cherokee County to inspire even greater achievement for students. By reviewing graduation data alone, I can see that a gap remains for students with disabilities, students served in English language support programs, and the Hispanic student group. I look forward to assessing current practices, facilitating the necessary adjustments so that all students perform at high levels and Cherokee is recognized as the highest quality school district in Georgia.

INDICATOR 14: "FIT" FOR  
POSITION AND DISTRICT  
COMMUNITY - Why should the board select you as their next Superintendent? The board is requiring residency in the district community, are you prepared to relocate and become an integral part of the community?

I firmly believe that effective leadership for the Cherokee County School District is not found in one person alone, but in one person who can unite the many essential contributors necessary to build the future for this premier school system. Sustainable success is dependent on the effectiveness of teams, not the actions of one, and my leadership reflects that approach. I have a proven record of building effective governance teams, leading teams of leaders, and unifying large communities to shared commitments and unprecedented results. The results for students include historic achievement gains for all students—particularly in reading levels at every grade level, tremendous advances for students with disabilities, and significant improvements in access and outcomes for African American and Hispanic students in advanced coursework. Now, more than ever, school systems need unifiers. Finding common ground amongst stakeholders will require courageous individuals who can step in the middle of difference and bring people together. I can do that and have, time and time again. I am uniquely prepared to work in a constantly changing political environment while simultaneously influencing policy development at all levels of government on behalf of the students, teachers, and leaders of the Cherokee community. I am energized by the prospect of serving in the Cherokee community. It is very meaningful today that I declare my intent to serve as your next Superintendent of Schools. This moment is meaningful for me in many ways; beyond presenting myself as a candidate, I come to Cherokee County as a parent. When my family and I consider where to raise our young, school-aged children, we care deeply about a highly engaged community and the caliber of schools. I would feel proud for my children to enroll in Cherokee County schools and to do my part to advance the legacy of exceptional education as I join your community.

Provide any additional information that you believe will support your application for the superintendent's position for which you are applying.

Personal Affirmation

Have you ever been dismissed, suspended or terminated, resigned or given the opportunity to resign, withdrawn an employment offer, or not offered re-employment from any professional, educational or management employment position, OR while under investigation, left employment?

No

Please provide the date(s) address of the employer, fully stated reason(s), basis and circumstances for the adverse action(s).

Do you understand that because of the nature of the position for which you are applying, that the school district employer may require a background check, including a search of fingerprint, criminal records and credit history?

Yes

Please explain.

Do you agree and consent for such background search and investigation to be conducted and agree to hold the school district and Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and all officials, representatives, and employees of the foregoing, harmless from all claims for libel, slander, invasion of privacy, intentional infliction of emotional distress and similar claims?

Yes

Please explain.

Have you ever had an adverse action (i.e. warning, reprimand, suspension, denial, voluntary surrender, disbarment, etc.) taken against a professional certificate, license or permit issued by any state agency?

No

Please explaining provide dates, agency and location

Are you currently the subject of OR have you ever been the subject of any investigation involving a violation of a profession's laws, rules, standards, Code of Ethics or Conduct by any state agency and/or involving a criminal act, sexual misconduct or physical harm to a child?

No

Please explain, provide dates, agency and location

Have you ever been convicted or pled to a lesser offense for any sexual offense or drug offense (felony or misdemeanor)?

No

Please explain and provide dates, location and other essential information.

Have you ever received a less than honorable discharge from any branch of the armed services of the United States?

No

Please explain

Please upload Form DD214

Do you have a relative(s) on the Board of Education or relative(s) employed after July 1, 2009 as a school district administrator in the district for which you are making application?

No

If you answered yes, please explain