

STEPHANIE S. JOHNSON, ED. D

May 9, 2026

Chairwoman Sandra Jackson-Lett
Rockdale County Board of Education
954 North Main Street
Conyers, Georgia 30012

Dear Chairwoman Jackson-Lett and Members of the Rockdale County Board of Education:

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my application for the position of Superintendent of Rockdale County Public Schools. With more than two decades of experience as an educator, counselor, principal, and state-level executive leader, I have consistently demonstrated the ability to raise student achievement, strengthen organizational effectiveness, build leadership capacity, and partner with boards of education and communities to ensure success for every student. I am eager to bring these experiences to Rockdale County, where my leadership experience and vision align closely with the Board's priorities for instructional excellence, fiscal stewardship, talent development, safety, innovation, and transparent community engagement.

Rockdale County Public Schools has a strong foundation, a clear commitment to student success, and the opportunity to emerge as one of Georgia's premier districts for academic excellence, innovation, and organizational effectiveness. My leadership focuses on aligning people, systems, and resources to deliver measurable student outcomes while building a culture of trust, stability, accountability, and continuous improvement.

As Georgia's Chief Turnaround Officer and Deputy Superintendent of School and District Effectiveness, I have successfully led the state's most ambitious school and district improvement efforts. Working closely with the State Board of Education, district boards, and local superintendents, I have provided governance training, supported effective policy adoption, and partnered with leaders to align instructional priorities, operational systems, and financial resources around student success. Under my leadership, more schools have made the improvements necessary to exit federal identification than at any other time in Georgia's history. Between 2023 and 2025, more than 90% of federally identified schools across Georgia made the required improvements to exit identification. This work demonstrates my ability to translate vision into measurable outcomes while maintaining transparency, accountability, and stakeholder trust.

In addition to leading statewide improvement efforts, I have supported high-performing and rapidly improving schools in strengthening instructional excellence, expanding advanced academic opportunities, increasing student achievement, and sustaining high levels of

performance over time. I have also worked directly with districts to strengthen school and district effectiveness by identifying systemic gaps, aligning operational and instructional priorities, stabilizing leadership structures, and building sustainable systems of accountability and continuous improvement. These experiences have prepared me to lead districts with diverse needs by balancing academic excellence, operational effectiveness, strategic planning, and community trust.

My leadership has also received national recognition. Mass Insight Education and Research highlighted Georgia under my direction as a model for implementing large-scale turnaround work that delivers sustainable results. This recognition reflects my ability to lead transformational work that builds long-term organizational capacity, sustainable improvement, and measurable results for students and communities.

Earlier in my career, I led transformational change as principal of Sequoyah Middle School, Jonesboro High School, and Maynard H. Jackson High School. Each school transitioned from “Needs Improvement” or “Priority” status to become Distinguished, Reward, or above-state-average performers. At Maynard H. Jackson High School, the graduation rate increased from 53.8% to 77%, while advanced academic opportunities expanded significantly through International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, fine arts, athletics, and innovative career and mentorship initiatives designed to increase student engagement and readiness for college and careers.

I am especially drawn to Rockdale County Public Schools because of its commitment to educating the whole child, expanding innovative academic and career pathways, and creating opportunities that prepare students to compete and succeed in a rapidly changing world. I believe my record of results, collaborative governance experience, operational leadership, and servant leadership philosophy position me to partner effectively with your Board of Education, educators, students, families, and community leaders to build upon Rockdale’s strong foundation and lead the district into its next chapter of excellence.

Thank you for considering my application. I welcome the opportunity to discuss how my proven results, executive leadership experience, and commitment to student success can advance the continued excellence of Rockdale County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stephanie S. Johnson", followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Dr. Stephanie S. Johnson, Applicant
Chief Turnaround Officer & Deputy Superintendent
Georgia Department of Education

DR. STEPHANIE S. JOHNSON, ED.D.

Leadership • Governance • Academic Excellence • Organizational Stability

Transformational educational executive with 30 years of public education experience, including 24 years of leadership in Georgia education. Currently serves as Georgia's Deputy Superintendent of School and District Effectiveness and Chief Turnaround Officer, leading statewide school improvement, district effectiveness, alternative education, and professional development initiatives impacting approximately 1.8 million students across 180 school districts.

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Nationally recognized for accelerating student achievement, leading large-scale school and district turnaround, strengthening organizational systems, improving literacy outcomes, and building collaborative partnerships with boards of education, superintendents, educators, families, and communities. Recognized as one of Georgia's Most Influential Women Leaders with a Senate Proclamation in 2026 and recipient of the 2024 GAEL Vision Award, 2023 National SREB State Leader of the Year Award for School Improvement, 2017 Nikki T. Randall Award from the Georgia Senate, 2016 Georgia Principal of the Year, and 2017 NASSP National Principal of the Year Finalist. Led statewide improvement efforts resulting in the highest percentage of federally identified schools making required improvements to exit identification status in Georgia history. Developed partnerships supporting more than one hundred school-based health centers statewide. Led literacy initiatives producing gains as high as 29.8% within one year in participating schools.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | Atlanta, Georgia
Deputy Superintendent / Chief Turnaround Officer
July 2017 – Present

Serve as executive leader for School and District Effectiveness, School Improvement, Alternative Schools, and Professional Development. Provide executive leadership, superintendent coaching, district support, school improvement strategy, accountability guidance, and professional learning support for school districts across Georgia.

Selected Accomplishments

- Led Georgia's statewide turnaround and continuous improvement efforts, resulting in the highest percentage of federally identified schools making required improvements to exit identification status in Georgia history.
- Provided direct support and coaching to district superintendents and school leaders to strengthen student outcomes and organizational effectiveness.
- Created statewide wraparound initiatives and partnerships supporting more than one hundred school-based health centers.
- Led Georgia's early literacy coaching initiative, resulting in gains as high as 29.8% within one year in participating schools.
- Supported the Growing Readers initiative, increasing K–2 benchmark proficiency from 12% to 63%.
- Partnered with Harvard University's Proving Ground initiative to implement evidence-based attendance improvement strategies to address chronic attendance in Georgia.
- Presented regularly at national and state conferences, including CCSSO, SREB, GSBA, GSSA, AASA, and the National ESEA Conference.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS | Atlanta, Georgia
Principal, Maynard H. Jackson High School
October 2012 – July 2017

Led the Jackson Cluster transformation and the successful turnaround of a federally identified Priority high school previously ranked in the bottom 5% of Georgia schools.

Selected Accomplishments

- Cleared Georgia Department of Education Priority designation through implementation of an accelerated turnaround strategy.
- Increased graduation rate from 53.8% to 77%.
- Eliminated bottom 5% rankings for subjects and student subgroups.
- Increased School Climate Star Rating to four out of five stars.
- Expanded academic opportunities through 18 Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate programming, and dual enrollment.
- Implemented sixty-eight extracurricular activities to strengthen school culture and student engagement.
- Created Mission Possible Summer Opportunity to connect students with employment, mentorship, and enrichment opportunities.
- Served as Atlanta Public Schools' principal representative on the Superintendent's Advisory Council.

CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS | Jonesboro, Georgia
Principal, Jonesboro High School
July 2010 – October 2012

Selected Accomplishments

- Cleared Needs Improvement 4 designation and achieved Reward School Progress status.
- Led initiatives resulting in Adequate Yearly Progress for the first time since 2004.
- Increased attendance and reduced chronic discipline.
- Served as Lead Principal for Area 1, mentoring and supporting new principals.
- Served on the Superintendent's Advisory Council.

CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS | Riverdale, Georgia

Principal, Sequoyah Middle School

July 2007 – July 2010

Selected Accomplishments

- Cleared Needs Improvement 3 status and achieved Distinguished Status.
 - Increased Georgia Writing Assessment performance from 41% to 81% within three years.
 - Increased attendance from 88.2% to 96.2%.
 - Increased ELA achievement by 20.5 percentage points and Math achievement by 20.9 percentage points.
 - Reduced discipline referrals from 1,057 to 716.
 - Achieved Georgia Safe School recognition.
 - Recognized by SREB/Making Middle Grades Work as a Top Ten school for academic gains.
 - Implemented "Pedagogy and Practice" professional development for new and struggling teachers.
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EARLIER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Principal, Morrow High School

Clayton County Public Schools | 2006 – 2007

Lead Counselor, Mount Zion High School

Clayton County Public Schools | 2003 – 2006

Senior Counselor, Riverdale High School

Clayton County Public Schools | 2001 – 2003

Counselor, Blount High School / Scarborough Middle School

Mobile County Public Schools | 1998 – 2001

English Language Arts Teacher, Jackson Middle School

Clarke County School District | 1995 – 1998

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Educational Leadership and Management

Capella University | Minneapolis, Minnesota
2015 – 2018

Graduated with Distinction | GPA: 4.0

Dissertation Focus: Evidence-Based School Improvement Systems

Educational Specialist (Ed.S.), School Counseling

University of South Alabama | Mobile, Alabama
1998

Master of Education (M.Ed.), Educational Leadership

University of South Alabama | Mobile, Alabama
1997

Master of Education (M.Ed.), Guidance and Counseling

University of South Alabama | Mobile, Alabama
1996

Master of Education (M.Ed.), Secondary Education and English

University of West Alabama | Livingston, Alabama
1995

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Psychology and English

The University of Alabama | Tuscaloosa, Alabama
1992

CERTIFICATIONS & LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

- Georgia Performance-Based Leadership Certification, Level 7
 - Alabama Educational Leadership Certification, Level 7
 - School Counseling Certification, Level 6
 - Harvard University Proving Ground
 - Harvard University Evolving Vision Institute
 - GLISI Power of 100 Performance-Based Leadership
 - GLISI Base Camp and Summit Leadership Certifications
 - Leader Keys Evaluation Program
 - Teacher Keys Evaluation Program
 - RTI/SST and 504 Trainer
 - Pearson Master Schedule Professional Developer and Trainer
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BOARD SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Council of Chief State School Officers
 - The School Superintendents Association (AASA)
 - Georgia Association of Educational Leaders
 - National Association of Secondary School Principals
 - Georgia State University Principal Center Board of Directors / Advisory Board
 - Southern Regional Education Board Advisory Board
 - Harvard Graduate School of Education Proving Ground Advisory Board
 - Georgia Family Connection Partnership Advisory Board
 - Governor’s Honors Program Advisory Board
 - Emory Medical Pediatric Center School-Based Health Center Advisory Board
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SELECT HONORS & STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

- Georgia Legislation Senate Proclamation – One of Seven Most Influential Women Leaders in Georgia (2026)
 - GAEL Vision Award (2024)
 - SREB National State Leader of the Year Award for School Improvement (2023)
 - University of Alabama “60 for 60” Honoree (2023)
 - NASSP National Principal of the Year Finalist (2017)
 - Georgia Senate Nikki T. Randall Servant Leader of the Year Award and Resolution, 2017
 - Georgia House of Representatives Community Leader of the Year and Resolution, 2017
 - Elevate K-12 Partner Leadership and Vision Award, 2017
 - State of Georgia Outstanding Georgia Citizen Award and Proclamation, 2016
 - Secretary of State’s Georgia Goodwill Ambassador Award, 2016
 - Georgia Principal of the Year (2016)
 - Atlanta Public Schools Principal of the Year (2016)
 - United States Department of Education Principal Fellow Finalist (2016)
 - Fulton County Commissioner Proclamation, 2016
 - DeKalb County Commissioner Proclamation, 2016
 - United States Department of Education Principal Fellow Finalist, 2016
 - United States Secretary of Defense Award for Human Resource Leadership, 2016
 - Georgia State University Principal Center’s Joe Richardson Award for Exemplary Leadership, 2015
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SELECT PRESENTATIONS & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- National ESEA Conference (2020, 2024)
- Georgia Association of Educational Leaders Conference (2024)
- Georgia School Superintendents Association Conference (2023, 2024)
- U.S. Department of Education Raise the Bar Roundtable (2023)

- GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference Presenter (2020–2023)
- SREB National Conference and Coaching Conference (2022, 2023)
- CCSSO National Conferences and Policy Forums (2018–2020)
- Harvard University Center for Education Policy Research State Roundtable (2019)
- AASA Women in Leadership Speaker (2019)
- National Dropout Prevention Conference (2017)

PUBLICATIONS, FEATURES & NATIONAL RECOGNITION

- School improvement leadership recognized by Dr. Gene Bottoms in *Tomorrow's High School: Creating Student Pathways for Both College and Career* (2021).
- Wraparound and school improvement work featured in Leigh Colburn's *The Wraparound Guide* (2021).
- Georgia performance improvement work documented as a success case in Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff's *Improving Performance Through Learning: A Practical Guide for Designing High Performance Learning Journeys* (2020).
- Equity and school improvement leadership recognized by Dr. Pedro Noguera in statewide and national education features and commentary (2016–Present).
- Mass Insight Education and Research identified Georgia's school improvement work as evidence of significant statewide progress under Dr. Johnson's leadership in an external performance review (2020).

COMMUNITY & SERVICE LEADERSHIP

- Junior League of Atlanta, Co-Chair of Wellspring Living Community Placement
- Georgia Association of Family and Community Partners Advisory Board
- New Hope Baptist Church, Mission Friends Instructor
- Heart Cry Nonprofit Organization Volunteer for Orphans
- University of Alabama Alumni Association Member
- Lifetouch Memory Mission Volunteer

Professional References

Richard Woods

State Superintendent

Georgia Department of Education

Matt Jones

Former Chief of Staff

Georgia Department of Education

Christy Todd

Current Chief of Staff

Georgia Department of Education

Stephanie Johnson

- **Personal Information**

You **may** contact my current employer.

I am available for employment after **6/1/2026**.

Current Base Salary **\$170,000**

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

2. **Address**

3. **Education History**

Capella University

Attended from 2015 to 2018

Graduated: **Yes**

Course:

Degree: **Doctor of Education (Ed.D)**

Major Area of Study or Concentration

Educational Leadership and Management

Minor Area of Study or Concentration

Instructional Leadership

Upload transcript

[Capella Transcript Doctorate in Educational Leadership.pdf](#)

Date Degree Awarded/Expected or if currently or formerly enrolled provide last date applicable

2018-12-15

University of South Alabama

Attended from 1995 to 1998

Graduated: **Yes**

Course:

Degree: **Educational Specialist (Ed.S)**

Major Area of Study or Concentration

Instructional Specialist, Ed.S

Minor Area of Study or Concentration

School Counseling

Upload transcript

[Univ South AL Transcript_0.pdf](#)

Date Degree Awarded/Expected or if currently or formerly enrolled provide last date applicable

1998-12-15

University of West Alabama

Attended from 1992 to 1995

Graduated: **Yes**

Course:

Degree: **Master of Education (M.Ed)**

Major Area of Study or Concentration

English

Minor Area of Study or Concentration

Secondary Education

Upload transcript

[Univ South AL Transcript.pdf](#)

Date Degree Awarded/Expected or if currently or formerly enrolled provide last date applicable

1995-05-27

University of Alabama

Attended from 1988 to 1992

Graduated: **No**

Course:

Degree: **Bachelor of Arts**

Major Area of Study or Concentration **Psychology**

Minor Area of Study or Concentration **English**

Upload transcript [UA Transcript Bachelors.pdf](#)

4. **Employment History**

Georgia Department of Education

Deputy Superintendent/Chief Turnaround Officer

From 1/20/2020 to Present

Reason for leaving: Currently employed.

Supervisor Name: **Richard Woods**

Supervisor Phone:

Supervisor Email:

Annual Salary **\$175,000**

Check here if we may contact
this employer **Yes**

Select one **Full-time position**

Key Responsibilities

1. Leading School and District Improvement

- Directs Georgia's statewide turnaround strategy for federally identified schools (Comprehensive Support and Improvement, Targeted Support and Improvement, and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement).
- Oversees the Continuous Improvement Team process, ensuring districts receive tailored support in leadership, instructional practice, and student achievement outcomes.
- Partners with superintendents and local boards of education to build capacity for long-term, sustainable improvement.

2. Building Leadership Capacity

- Provides targeted training and professional development for superintendents, principal supervisors, principals, and assistant principals.
- Strengthens leadership pipelines by developing current and future leaders to create high-performing, student-centered schools.
- Coaches and mentors leaders on effective instructional leadership, collaborative planning, and data-driven school improvement.

3. Advancing Instructional Leadership

- Leads efforts to improve Tier 1 instruction in all schools by promoting high-quality, standards-aligned teaching practices with evidence-based resources.
- Builds the capacity of school leaders and teachers to provide effective interventions at Tier 2 and Tier 3, ensuring that students receive targeted supports based on their academic and behavioral needs.
- Oversees special education support specialists in ATSI and TSI schools, ensuring schools are equipped to meet the needs of Students with Disabilities (SWD) and effectively implement IEPs.
- Provides targeted support for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs in federally identified school districts, ensuring fair access and opportunity for multilingual learners.
- Ensures that both academically rigorous opportunities for high-performing students and interventions for students performing below grade level are in place, so that every learner is challenged and supported.
- Trains teachers in personalized learning strategies that optimize instruction across all learning levels, ensuring classrooms are responsive to the diverse needs of students.

4. Driving Professional Development

- Designs and leads professional learning for school and district leaders, teachers, and state staff to strengthen instructional leadership, curriculum implementation, and data-driven decision-making.
- Expands statewide initiatives such as structured literacy coaching, attendance improvement pilots, Tier 1 leadership training, and leadership development programs.

5. Supervising Alternative Education and Whole-Child Supports

- Oversees state alternative education programs, ensuring alignment with graduation pathways and student re-engagement strategies.
- Leads efforts to integrate wraparound supports, school-based health centers, and student success centers that address both academic and non-academic barriers to learning.

6. Collaborating with State and National Partners

- Represents Georgia in cross-agency collaborations with the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, RESAs, GAEL (Georgia Association of Educational Leaders and all affiliates) and national partners such as Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Southern Regional Education Board.
- Provides strategic guidance on policy, accountability, and fairness-driven initiatives to ensure Georgia meets federal and state performance expectations.

7. Delivering Measurable Results

- More schools have exited federal "lowest-performing" status than at any other time in Georgia's history. Since 2017, federally identified schools have shown measurable improvements each year. In 2023 and 2024 alone, more than 240 schools made the improvements necessary to exit identification, demonstrating her ability to translate vision into measurable outcomes.

Through these responsibilities, I have established a reputation as a results-driven, instructionally focused leader who works collaboratively with educators, families, and communities to transform schools, improve student outcomes, and strengthen public trust in education.

Key Accomplishments	<p>-2023 SREB National State Leader of the Year Award Recipient for School Improvement</p> <p>- Federally Identified Schools have exited low performing status at a higher rate each year since 2017. For 2022 and 2023, the largest percentages of CSI and TSI schools exited in the history of Georgia with ninety-two schools exiting in 2022 and 86 CSI and TSI schools exiting in 2023. With Promise Schools included for 2023, 144 schools exited lowest performance in 2023 (January 9, 2024, Press Release, AJC).</p> <p>-Placed 60 additional full-time literacy coaches in elementary schools throughout the state, focusing on the lowest-performing 5 percent of elementary schools. These school-level coaches ensure an intensive focus on literacy in schools identified for additional support, as part of Georgia's broader tiered coaching model which will place regional coaches throughout the state. Through this tiered and tailored model, teachers and leaders throughout the state receive proven, nationally recognized training in structured literacy and the science of reading.</p> <p>-Implemented a Statewide K-3 Literacy initiative with Growing Readers (which incorporates phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). Schools submit beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of year data for 5373 k-2 students. The percentage of all students meeting benchmarks grew by fifty percentage points from 12 percent at the beginning of the year to 63 percent at the end of the year.</p> <p>-Implemented The Multi-Sensory Reading Instruction Training Grant to provide funding for every district with federally identified schools to receive training in Orton Gillingham Academy Classroom Educator, Wilson Reading, and other Multi-Sensory Reading Programs outlined in SB 48 Dyslexia guidance.</p> <p>- Implemented GRASP Counselors (Graduates Ready to Attain Success in Postsecondary) to support schools earning less than 75% graduation rates. Georgia's graduation rate increased, rising from 80.6% in 2017 to 84.9% in 2023, which is an all-time high since the state began using the adjusted cohort calculation now required by federal law. The state's federally identified school's overall graduation rate for all CSI schools increased by approximately 6% (October 16, 2023, Press Release, AJC).</p> <p>-Implemented a State Agency literacy professional development plan that requires all employees to complete science of reading modules and certification in the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy using Cox Campus to better coach and serve district personnel with increasing literacy instruction to students in schools.</p> <p>- Georgia's public-school students are now beating the national average on the SAT with a composite score of 1045 (533 ELA and 515 Math), forty-two points higher than the national average for public school students (September 25, 2023, Press Release, AJC). Georgia's public-school students surpassed the national average composite score on the ACT in 2023 with a composite score of 21.3. The national average for 2023 was 19.5.</p> <p>Georgia also outperformed the nation in English (20.7), reading (22.2), science (21.2), and CCRPI Content mastery scores improved again for 2022 to 2023 - with the statewide score increasing from 63 to 64.7 for elementary schools, 60 to 60.9 for middle schools, and 64.7 to 65 for high schools. The average CCRPI increase for schools on the 2023 Federal Exit List is 16.4% (CSI exit schools) and 6.1% (TSI 2023 exit schools)</p>
<p>Number of Persons Supervised</p> <p>Budget Allocated for which you are responsible</p>	<p>256</p> <p>150 Million Dollars (Federal Budget)</p>
Other Information	<p>Chief Turnaround Officer was added to my GaDOE job title and responsibilities in January 2020. I currently serve both roles as Chief Turnaround Officer and Deputy Superintendent.</p> <p>Clarifying the number of people supervised, I directly supervise 256 state department employees. However, I supervise an additional 100 contracted employees at RESAs and other partner organizations through Memorandums of Agreements with federal and state funding.</p>

From 7/15/2017 to 1/20/2020

Reason for leaving: Promotion to Serve Both CTO and Deputy Superintendent positions at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

Supervisor Name: **Matt Jones, Former Chief of Staff**

Supervisor Phone:

Supervisor Email:

Annual Salary **\$150,000**

Check here if we may
contact this employer **Yes**

Select one **Full-time position**

Key Responsibilities - GaDOE Deputy Superintendent of School Improvement:

1. Lead Statewide Turnaround Strategy

-Direct Georgia's school improvement and turnaround strategy for federally identified schools (Comprehensive Support and Improvement [CSI], Targeted Support and Improvement [TSI], Additional Targeted Support [ATSI], and Graduation Rate Only schools), ensuring sustainable academic growth and compliance with ESSA.

2. Conduct Comprehensive Needs Assessments

-Oversee the Georgia District Review Process (GDRP) and Georgia School Assessment of Performance on Systems (GSAPS) to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in districts and schools, followed by data-driven strategic planning.

3. Build Leadership Capacity

-Provide coaching, mentoring, and professional development for superintendents, principal supervisors, principals, and assistant principals to strengthen leadership pipelines and ensure effective Tier 1 instruction and evidence-based interventions.

4. Advance Instructional Leadership

- Promote and monitor implementation of high-quality, standards-aligned Tier 1 instruction, while ensuring targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports for students, including Students with Disabilities (SWD), English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and advanced learners.

5. Expand Whole-Child and Wraparound Supports

-Expand and supervise initiatives such as school-based health centers, wraparound centers, and student success grants to address both academic and non-academic barriers to learning.

6. Expand Literacy and Numeracy Initiatives

-Implement and monitor statewide structured literacy programs, including Orton-Gillingham, Growing Readers, multisensory reading instruction, and structured literacy coaches, while coordinating math support such as Ampact tutors to accelerate student learning.

7. Collaborate with the State Board of Education and Policymakers

Present data and policy recommendations to the Georgia State Board of Education to secure resources and approvals (e.g., literacy coaches, math tutors, technology equity grants) and ensure alignment of state and federal mandates.

8. Develop and Monitor Strategic Plans

- Lead design and implementation of statewide strategic improvement plans with measurable goals, aligning priorities, funding, and personnel to maximize student outcomes.

9. Coordinate with State, Regional, and National Partners

-Collaborate with Governor's Office of Student Achievement, Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), CCSSO, SREB, University Systems of Georgia, Technical Schools of Georgia, and other organizations to integrate evidence-based practices and scale successful models across Georgia.

10. Ensure Accountability and Reporting

-Monitor CCRPI, Milestones, and graduation rate data to track progress, ensure compliance with state and federal accountability systems, and report outcomes to stakeholders with transparency.

Key Responsibilities

Key Accomplishments	<p>-Reorganized the Georgia Department of Education's structure from compliance to tiered and tailored support to better improve our service to school districts and improve outcomes for children.</p> <p>- Mass Insight Education and Research found significant evidence of objective and quantifiable progress in Georgia's external performance review reflecting a significant change following a shift in administration and education approaches attributed to my leadership (2020). The national report recognized the work implemented under my leadership at GADOE that incorporated continuous improvement teams, wraparound centers and services for schools, and built personnel capacity with evidence-based internal processes</p> <p>-Documented as a Georgia success case in Dr. Brinkerhoff's publication of Improving Performance Through Learning: A Practical Guide for Designing High Performance Learning Journeys.</p> <p>- In 2017, I created case studies in schools that had been on the lowest performing list for six consecutive years and showed no progress with district, regional, and state support. The case studies provided deeper insight into individual school situations and a greater understanding of the current practices. Our initial goal was to determine what was needed to reach CCRPI score of 60 or higher. Eight schools were selected, intentional funding and support were provided, and all eight schools improved met their CCRPI goals and exited the lowest performing list the following year.</p> <p>- Created Student Success Grants for additional support to students with disabilities. These funds helped school districts ensure the necessary infrastructure and supports for leaders, teachers, and families are available, while focusing on specific subgroup needs.</p> <p>- Created an agency-wide Continuous Improvement Team approach to respond to needs of school districts served by internal agency staff to ensure through a theory of action that students and teachers are priority for service and support from district, regional, and state leadership.</p> <p>- In 2018, I organized and supported a wraparound initiative for the state of Georgia and utilized Title funds and partnerships to support wraparound centers for schools to support their students as a comprehensive and proactive strategy to improve schools. The wraparound initiative was a response to the growing need to address non-academic barriers to student learning and to a body of research that shows students are better able to learn and achieve when those barriers are removed. The initial \$1,040,000 provided regional wraparound coordinators in 16 of Georgia's Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). This was a first-of-its-kind position to help schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support under Georgia's ESSA plan create and coordinate their wraparound centers.</p> <p>Since implementing the initiative, our department has worked with state and nationally recognized wraparound experts, model districts, and other state agencies to provide training and support to the schools. The wraparound centers operate before, during and after the traditional school day, connecting students and families with resources in order to support and improve student achievement. Through the centers, students have access to community resources like food pantries and clothes closets; mental health counseling; tutoring and academic support; workshops on college applications, resumes, interview skills, and money management; help connecting with local job opportunities; and more.</p>	
	Number of Persons Supervised	256
	Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	150 Million Dollars
	Other Information	The budget I solely supervise is 150 to 175 million dollars annually from Title 1003a. However, I directly influence and approve all federal and state funds that are allocated to federally identified schools. These funds exceed 1.5 billion dollars.

Atlanta Public Schools (Maynard H. Jackson High School)

Principal

From 11/1/2012 to 7/16/2017

Reason for leaving: Promoted to Deputy Superintendent at the Georgia Department of Education

Supervisor Name:	David White
Supervisor Phone:	
Supervisor Email:	
Annual Salary	\$129,000
Check here if we may contact this employer	Yes
Select one	Full-time position

Key Responsibilities

- Established and communicated a clear mission and vision for turnaround, uniting faculty, students, families, and community partners around high expectations for teaching, learning, and college/career readiness.
- Demonstrated integrity, fairness, and ethical leadership, rebuilding trust within the APS community following the district-wide cheating scandal and modeling accountability for staff and students.
- Promoted access and opportunity for all learners by closing subgroup performance gaps and ensuring Students with Disabilities (SWD), English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and economically disadvantaged students received targeted instructional and behavioral supports.
- Expanded rigorous and accelerated pathways by introducing 18 Advanced Placement courses, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program, and Dual Enrollment partnerships with Georgia Tech, ensuring students were prepared for postsecondary opportunities.
- Redesigned curriculum and assessments to accelerate student achievement, align with Georgia standards, and embed college- and career-readiness skills across all content areas.
- Integrated global learning opportunities through international travel to Germany, Nicaragua, China, and Paris, directly connecting cultural immersion to world language instruction.
- Fostered a safe, supportive, and engaging school culture by expanding extracurricular opportunities to 68 programs and launching the Mission Possible summer employment and mentorship initiative.
- Developed teacher and leader professional capacity through targeted professional learning, instructional coaching, and data-driven collaboration designed to increase teacher effectiveness and student performance.
- Strengthened professional learning communities (PLCs) by establishing structures for collaborative planning, aligned instruction, and shared accountability for student achievement.
- Designed and implemented a comprehensive turnaround plan, coordinating curriculum, instruction, human resources, operations, and community engagement to ensure sustainable improvement and recognition as a Distinguished APS Choice School.

Key Accomplishments

- Won APS Principal of the Year, Georgia Principal of the Year, NASSP National Principal of the Year Finalist, and Georgia's Joe Richardson Leader of the Year Award.
- After moving Sequoyah Middle School and Jonesboro High School (MJHS) from Needs Improvement to Distinguished and Rewards Status schools in Clayton County, the Georgia Department of Education recruited me to apply for the Turnaround Principal position at Maynard Jackson High School in Atlanta Public Schools (Priority Level school - bottom five percent in state) to lead the turnaround. After five years, data from CCRPI and SLDS indicated that MJHS was exceeding the state average with academic achievement points and progress points, and no subjects or subgroups were ranked in the bottom five percent of the state any longer.
- The School Climate Score increased to a 4 of 5 possible stars.
- Cleared GADOE Priority Designation after successfully implementing an accelerated turnaround strategy focused on curriculum, assessment, instruction, human resources, and community.
- Increased graduation rate from 53.8 in 2012 to 77 in 2016. The number of students who graduated and then persisted in college quadrupled from 14 students in 2012 to 65 in the class of 2017.
- Closed gaps in subgroup performance (Students with Disabilities, ELL, and Socioeconomically disadvantaged)
- Implemented 18 Advanced Placement courses to enhance accelerated opportunities for students, implemented IB Diploma Program, and restructured the entire curriculum at MH Jackson to focus on acceleration with increased opportunities for college and career readiness.
- Collaborated with faculty, community, and business partners to implement 68 new extracurricular activities to serve talents and strengths of students while encouraging a culture of engagement. Implemented world travel to Germany, France, Nicaragua, and China for students to make real world connections to languages and experience cultures they were studying in our school.

Number of Persons Supervised	156
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	1.5 Million Dollars
Other Information	Clarifying the number of people supervised, I directly supervised 156 employees and approximately 1500 students annually.

Clayton County Public School System
Principal
 From 7/1/2010 to 10/31/2012

Reason for leaving: Promoted to Turnaround Principal at Maynard H. Jackson High School in Atlanta Public Schools.

Supervisor Name:	Mrs. Susan Patrick
Supervisor Phone:	
Supervisor Email:	
Annual Salary	100,000
Check here if we may contact this employer	Yes
Select one	Full-time position -Established and communicated a vision for school improvement, mobilizing staff, students, and the community to achieve rapid academic and cultural turnaround. -Modeled ethical leadership and accountability, fostering trust and transparency with families and stakeholders while ensuring compliance with Board of Education policies. -Closed achievement gaps and expanded access to rigorous learning opportunities, ensuring Students with Disabilities (SWD), ESOL learners, and economically disadvantaged students received targeted supports and interventions. - Led curriculum alignment, assessment, and instructional improvement efforts to raise academic achievement and prepare students for postsecondary success. -Provided professional learning and coaching for teachers and staff, building instructional capacity and promoting shared accountability for student outcomes. - Mentored and developed new and novice principals in Area 1 as Lead Principal, strengthening district-wide leadership pipelines. - Created a safe and supportive learning environment, addressing chronic discipline issues through progressive discipline practices and schoolwide climate improvements. - Increased attendance and student engagement through schoolwide initiatives designed to motivate learners and foster a sense of belonging. - Strengthened collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs), aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment while promoting data-driven decision-making. - Directed all aspects of school operations, including budget, scheduling, staffing, facilities management, and community partnerships, ensuring resources were aligned with instructional priorities. - Clayton County Principal of the Year Runner-Up for 2010 and 2011 -Lead Principal for Area 1 (Mentored and provided professional development for new and novice principals while supporting all schools in Area 1) 2010 to 2012 -Cleared Needs Improvement 4 Designation and Moved to State Level Rewards Progress Designation -Led curriculum, assessment, and professional development initiatives that resulted in Jonesboro High School making Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2010-2011 school term for the first time since 2004 and received Rewards Status for Progress in 2012. - Increased attendance and significantly reduced chronic discipline. - Provided leadership and supervision in the areas of instructional leadership, staff development, staff evaluation, data analysis, operations, and finance.

Key Responsibilities	
Key Accomplishments	
Number of Persons Supervised	127

Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	\$1.2 Million Dollars
Other Information	Clarifying the number of people supervised, I directly supervised 127 employees and approximately 2000 students annually.

Sequoyah Middle School (Clayton County Public Schools)

Principal

From 7/1/2007 to 7/1/2010

Reason for leaving: Promotion to Principal at Jonesboro High School at Superintendent's request.

Supervisor Name:	Mr. Derrick Manning
Supervisor Phone:	
Supervisor Email:	
Annual Salary	\$87,000
Check here if we may contact this employer	Yes
Select one	Full-time position - Directed redesign of curriculum, assessments, and instructional practices in literacy and mathematics to accelerate student growth. - Conducted ongoing data reviews of student performance and subgroup achievement; implemented targeted intervention programs. - Designed and led the Pedagogy and Practice professional development program for new and struggling teachers, improving instructional effectiveness.
Key Responsibilities	- Fostered a positive and safe learning environment through proactive discipline systems and student engagement initiatives. - Expanded testing and placement of gifted students while strengthening services for English Learners (ESOL) and Students with Disabilities. - Built strong partnerships with families and community organizations to support student success. - Managed staffing, scheduling, and school operations to maximize instructional time and resources. - Cleared "Needs Improvement 3" designation and achieved Distinguished School status. - Improved Georgia Writing Assessment pass rates from 41% to 81% in three years. - Increased attendance from 88.2% to 96.2%. - Raised ELA scores by 20.5 points and Math scores by 20.9 points on CRCT.
Key Accomplishments	- Subgroup gains: SWD +26.5%, Hispanic +26.3%, ESOL +38.5%. - Reduced discipline referrals from 1,057 to 716; recognized as a Georgia Safe School. - Named an SREB/MMGW Top 10 School for Test Gains (2009-2010). - Recognized by the Georgia DOE for Exemplary ESOL accommodations (2009).

Number of Persons Supervised	75
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	\$750,000 approximately
Other Information	Clarifying the number of people supervised, I directly supervised 75 employees and approximately 950 students annually.

Morrow High School (Clayton County Public School System)

Assistant Principal

From 7/1/2006 to 6/30/2007

Reason for leaving: Promoted to principal's position at Sequoyah Middle School.

Supervisor Name: **Dr. Barbara Pulliam**
Supervisor Phone:
Supervisor Email:
Annual Salary **\$76,000**
Check here if we may contact this employer **Yes**
Select one **Full-time position**

-Led development and monitoring of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), aligning goals with district and state accountability requirements.

-Created and managed the master schedule, ensuring effective use of instructional time and equitable teacher assignments.

-Oversaw discipline and school safety, implementing a progressive discipline plan to reduce incidents and improve school climate.

- Facilitated Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for teachers to analyze student data, identify interventions, and share effective instructional strategies.

- Supported curriculum and instructional leadership by observing classrooms, providing feedback, and coaching teachers.

- Coordinated staff evaluation processes, ensuring compliance with performance standards and professional growth plans.

- Fostered student and family engagement by addressing concerns, promoting social-emotional learning, and collaborating with parents.

- Assisted the principal in daily operations, finance, facilities, and scheduling to maintain smooth school management.

- Improved school climate through stronger discipline systems and student engagement.

- Increased teacher collaboration and instructional alignment through effective PLC implementation.

- Reduced discipline referrals and built a safer, more supportive environment for students and staff.

- Established stronger operational systems for scheduling and SIP monitoring that supported ongoing school improvement.

Key Responsibilities

Key Accomplishments

Number of Persons Supervised **150**
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible **\$250,000 Approximately**

Mt. Zion High School (Clayton County Public Schools)

Lead Counselor

From 7/1/2003 to 7/1/2006

Reason for leaving: Promoted to Assistant Principal at Morrow High School

Supervisor Name: **Mr. Gary Townsend**
Supervisor Phone:
Supervisor Email:
Annual Salary **\$65,000**
Check here if we may contact this employer **Yes**
Select one **Full-time position**

Key Responsibilities	-Directed the counseling department, coordinating staff and programming to meet the academic, career, and social-emotional needs of students.
	-Designed and delivered college and career readiness initiatives, including scheduling, transcript production, and graduation planning.
	-Provided crisis intervention and mental health support, serving as a first responder for students in need.
	- Analyzed student data to identify academic and social-emotional trends, designing programs to increase graduation readiness.
	- Coordinated communication with families and community agencies to ensure wraparound supports.
Key Accomplishments	- Facilitated parent workshops and school-wide information sessions on college admissions, financial aid, and academic planning.
	- Increased student college readiness and access to postsecondary opportunities.
	- Improved accuracy and efficiency in transcript processing and student scheduling.
Number of Persons Supervised	- Strengthened counseling support for students at risk, contributing to higher graduation outcomes.
	5
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	\$150,000

Clayton County Public School District
Senior Counselor, Riverdale High School
 From 7/1/2001 to 6/30/2003

Reason for leaving: Promoted to Lead Counselor at Mount Zion High School

Supervisor Name:	Mrs. Margie Smith
Supervisor Phone:	
Supervisor Email:	
Annual Salary	\$56,000
Check here if we may contact this employer	Yes
Select one	Full-time position
Key Responsibilities	- Coordinated Student Support Team (SST) and Section 504 processes to meet student needs.
	- Provided academic advising and career counseling for high school students.
	Implemented testing preparation programs for graduation and college entrance exams.
	- Organized College and Career Nights, Financial Aid workshops, and Career Days to connect students with postsecondary options.
	- Served as a liaison with teachers and parents to monitor student progress and implement interventions.
Key Accomplishments	- Developed a testing preparation program that resulted in a 99.5% pass rate on the Georgia High School Graduation Exam through targeted test preparation and advising.
	- Increased scholarship opportunities and postsecondary enrollment for graduating seniors.
	- Enhanced communication among students, families, and staff to strengthen academic and career planning.
Number of Persons Supervised	0
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	0

Mobile County Public School System

School Counselor, Blount High School/Scarborough Middle School

From 7/1/1998 to 6/30/2001

Reason for leaving: Relocation to Georgia

Supervisor Name:	Mrs. Dorothy Cooley
Supervisor Phone:	
Supervisor Email:	
Annual Salary	\$52,000
Check here if we may contact this employer	Yes
Select one	Full-time position
	- Delivered academic, career, and social-emotional counseling for middle and high school students.
	- Facilitated transitions from middle to high school, helping students adapt academically and socially.
Key Responsibilities	- Organized parent-teacher conferences and academic support services for struggling students.
	- Developed guidance lessons on study skills, goal-setting, and conflict resolution.
	- Coordinated with community agencies to provide additional mental health and support services.
	- Improved attendance rates and reduced chronic absenteeism through proactive interventions.
Key Accomplishments	- Strengthened support for at-risk students, increasing retention and academic performance.
	- Provided individualized counseling that built resilience and improved overall school climate.
Number of Persons Supervised	0
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	0

Clark County School District

English Teacher

From 7/1/1995 to 6/30/1998

Reason for leaving: Relocated to Mobile, Alabama for promotion to school counselor

Supervisor Name:	Dr. Bernice Johnson, Principal
Supervisor Phone:	
Supervisor Email:	
Annual Salary	\$32,000
Check here if we may contact this employer	Yes
Select one	Full-time position
	- Designed and delivered English/Language Arts curriculum that emphasized reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills.
	- Implemented differentiated instruction to address the needs of diverse learners, including advanced, struggling, and English Learner students.
	- Integrated formative and summative assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction.
Key Responsibilities	- Developed and coordinated a student resiliency program across all middle schools in Clarke County to strengthen character, responsibility, and perseverance.
	- Collaborated with colleagues to align curriculum and share effective instructional strategies.
	- Sponsored and coordinated peer tutoring and community tutoring programs, linking students with mentors and additional academic support.
	- Partnered with athletic staff to monitor student-athlete academic performance and ensure eligibility.

Key Accomplishments	- Named Teacher of the Year (1997-1998) for excellence in instruction and student achievement.
	- Significantly improved student literacy outcomes through individualized reading and writing interventions.
	- Increased student engagement and accountability through extracurricular support programs.
	- Established a strong reputation as an instructional leader early in career, leading to transition into counseling and leadership roles.
Number of Persons Supervised	0
Budget Allocated for which you are responsible	0

5. **References**

Richard Woods, Immediate Supervisor

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**
 Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
 Current Position **State Superintendent**

Address

Matt Jones, Former Supervisor/GaDOE Chief of Staff

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**
 Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
 Current Position **Former GaDOE Chief of Staff**

Address

Christy Todd, Current GaDOE Chief of Staff

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **1**
 Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
 Current Position **Chief of Staff**

Address

Tanzy Kilcrease, GaDOE Colleague

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**
 Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
 Current Position **Director of Turnaround**

Address

Rebecca Gillette, Colleague

Cell:

Years Known **5**
Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
Current Position **Director of School and District Improvement**

Address

Arveeta Turner, Colleague

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **5**
Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
Current Position **Chief of Human Resources**

Address

Lisa Kinnemore, Board Member

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**
Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
Current Position **State Board of Education Member**

Address

Shaun Owen, Colleague

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**
Organization **Georgia Department of Education**
Current Position **Deputy Superintendent, Federal Programs**

Address

Rosalyn Rice-Harris, Director of National Collaborative Affiliation

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**
Organization **CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers)**
Current Position **Senior Director, Collaboratives Strategy**

Address

Curtis Jones, Colleague and Mentor

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**
Organization **GSSA Director**
Current Position **GSSA Director**

Address

Leslie Bussey, Colleague/Professional Partner

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **12**

Organization **GLISI**

Current Position **CEO/Executive Director**

Address

Stacey Lutz, Colleague/Professional Partner

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**

Organization **GOSA (Governor's Office of Student Achievement)**

Current Position **Statewide Director of Literacy and Strategic Programs**

Address

April Aldridge, Colleague

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **3**

Organization **Georgia Department of Education**

Current Position **Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning**

Address

Keith Osborn, Colleague

Cell:

Years Known **9**

Organization **Georgia Department of Education**

Current Position **Deputy Superintendent, Technology Services**

Address

Barbara Wall, Colleague

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**

Organization **Georgia Department of Education**

Current Position **Deputy Superintendent, CTAE**

Address

Justin Hill, Colleague

j

Cell:

Reference Evaluation Form [View Evaluation Form](#)

Years Known **9**

Organization **Georgia Department of Education**

Current Position

Deputy Superintendent, Whole Child Support

Address

6. **Files**

[GAPSC Certificate](#) - Credentials

7. **Certifications**

Other: 445320

I have L7 Certification Status (Doctorate Level) for Leadership and School Counseling. The License type prompt on the application did not include a Level 7.

Atlanta, GA

United States

8. **Additional Information**

Honors and Awards

Throughout my career, I have been recognized extensively at the local, state, and national levels for leadership, service, and contributions to education. These honors reflect my commitment to student success and transformational leadership, as well as the collective dedication of the teams, schools, districts, and communities I have been privileged to serve.

Recent State and National Recognitions:

-2023 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) State Leader of the Year Award for School Improvement

-2023 Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) Vision Award

-2023 University of Alabama "60 for 60" Honoree - recognized as one of the 60 most influential Black graduates since the university's integration in 1963

National and State-Level Honors:

-National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) National Principal of the Year Finalist (2017)

-Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals (GASSP) Georgia Principal of the Year (2016)

-Lifetouch Memory Mission Recipient (2017)

-Georgia Senate Nikki T. Randall Servant Leader of the Year Award and Resolution (2017)

-Georgia House of Representatives Community Leader of the Year and Resolution (2017)

-Elevate K-12 Partner Leadership and Vision Award (2017)

-Outstanding Georgia Citizen Award and Proclamation - State of Georgia (2016)

-Georgia Goodwill Ambassador Award - Georgia Secretary of State (2016)

-U.S. Department of Education Principal Fellow Finalist (2016)

-U.S. Secretary of Defense Award for Human Resource Leadership (2016)

Local and District Recognitions:

-Atlanta City Council Key to the City and Proclamation (2016)

-Atlanta Chief of Schools Principal of the Year (2016)

-Atlanta Public Schools Principal of the Year (2016)

-Fulton County Commissioner Proclamation (2016)

-DeKalb County Commissioner Proclamation (2016)

-Atlanta Board of Education Resolution (2016)

-Pinnacle Leader of the Year Award (2016)

- Shining Star in Education Award (2016)
- Clark Atlanta University Upward Bound Leader Appreciation Award (2016)
- Georgia State University Principal Center Joe Richardson Award for Exemplary Leadership (2015)
- Atlanta Families Award for Excellence in Education Winner (2014)
- Atlanta Cowboys Youth Football Association Appreciation Award (2013)

Early Career Honors:

- Finalist, Clayton County Principal of the Year (2011, 2012)
- SREB National Conference Principal's Recognition for School Improvement (2010)
- Mount Zion High School Educator of the Month (2005)
- Chapter 8 Counselor of the Year (2000)
- Jackson High School Teacher of the Year (1997)
- Alpha Theta Chi Honor Society (1997)

Media Features and Articles:

Noguera, P. A. (2016, May 3). Turnaround of Atlanta's Maynard Jackson High offers national model. Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Dr. Pedro Noguera credited Principal Stephanie Johnson as the driving force behind the school's transformation.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution (2016, May 4). APS high school shows power of steady reform. Dr. Pedro Noguera emphasized Johnson's role in strengthening instruction and attracting community support.

James Magazine GA (2017, July 7). Who is Stephanie Johnson? Overview of Johnson's leadership and appointment to GaDOE.

University of South Alabama Newsroom (2017, August 24). Meet USA alum and Georgia's "Turnaround Principal."

Porch Press (2014-2016). Community reporting on Maynard Jackson High School's transformation under Johnson's leadership.

Professional and Organizational Recognitions

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). (2023). Recognition by Dr. Gene Bottoms and Dr. Stephen Pruitt with the State Leader of the Year Award.

Mass Insight Education & Research. (2022). Building district capacity for sustainable school turnaround: Lessons from Georgia. Case study highlighting Johnson's statewide leadership.

Wikipedia (2025, August update). Maynard H. Jackson High School entry cites Johnson's appointment in 2012, her recognition as Georgia Principal of the Year, and as a National Principal of the Year finalist.

Books and Case Studies

Bottoms, G. (2018). Making Schools Work: High Schools That Work and Beyond. Southern Regional Education Board. References Johnson's turnaround leadership as a model for accelerating student achievement.

Coburn, L. A. (2020). Case Studies in Urban School Leadership: Lessons from the Field. Routledge. Highlights Johnson's work at Maynard Jackson High School and State Leadership at GaDOE as an exemplar in building staff capacity and community trust.

Brinkerhoff, R. O. (2019). The Success Case Method: Building More Effective Programs. Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Uses Johnson's Georgia leadership as a case study in performance improvement.

Interests, Hobbies, Special Talents

Beyond my professional career in education, I am deeply committed to service and personal growth. I currently serve as a co-chair for the Junior League's Human Trafficking Committee, where I help provide critical support and resources to girls ages 12 to 17 at Well Spring Living. This work reflects my passion for advocacy and for ensuring that vulnerable youth have access to safety, opportunity, and hope.

My personal interests and talents have also been shaped by a lifelong love of music and the arts. I grew up playing the piano and organ for my church, and I am a proud former trumpet player in the University of Alabama’s Million Dollar Band. To this day, I remain a strong supporter of University of Alabama football. I also enjoy theater, traveling, and cooking, all of which allow me to connect with others, embrace creativity, and explore diverse cultures and experiences.

These interests—service, music, athletics, the arts, and family traditions—complement my professional work by grounding me in community, creativity, and balance.

Community Outreach

Community outreach has been a defining element of my life and leadership. At New Hope Baptist Church, I teach Mission Friends and serve in Heart Cry, an orphan ministry dedicated to supporting vulnerable children. These experiences shape my belief that service is a calling and that schools and communities thrive when we work together to meet the needs of children and families.

I have extended this commitment through board and advisory board service with organizations such as the Georgia School-Based Health Alliance, Georgia Family Connection Partnership, and Emory Medical Pediatrics School-Based Health Center Advisory Board. In these roles, I have worked collaboratively across sectors to align education, health, and social supports for students and families. I also volunteer with Wellspring Living through my leadership at the Junior League of Atlanta, where I work to make a positive difference in the lives of girls ages 12 to 17 who are victims of human trafficking, offering support and hope for healing and restoration.

As a principal, I designed schools as centers of community life. At Maynard Jackson High School, I launched the Mission Possible Summer Opportunity Program, connecting students with paid jobs and mentors, and expanded extracurricular activities to 68 clubs and organizations, which drew in parents, alumni, and community leaders as active partners. At Jonesboro High School and Sequoyah Middle School, I created strong family engagement programs and partnerships with nonprofits and local businesses that improved attendance, reduced discipline, and expanded academic supports.

At the state level, in my role as Deputy Superintendent and Chief Turnaround Officer, I have scaled community outreach through initiatives such as establishing wraparound centers, placing student support specialists in schools, launching attendance partnerships with Harvard’s Proving Ground, and expanding school-based health centers with healthcare providers. These efforts demonstrate my commitment to ensuring schools are supported by comprehensive networks of care that extend beyond academics.

My outreach has also reached the international level. In 2017, as a Lifetouch Memory Mission Recipient, I traveled to the Dominican Republic to help build a school in a city that had never had one, providing children with their first opportunity for formal education. This life-changing experience reinforced my belief that access to education is a universal right and deepened my commitment to advocacy for children everywhere.

Through these roles and experiences, I have consistently united faith communities, families, nonprofits, businesses, and government partners in the shared mission of empowering students, supporting families, and strengthening communities.

9. **Other Training**

Institution, Program or Trainer/Consultant Providing Training
GaDOE LKES and TKES Evaluator Training
Training Location

At, GA
United States

Duration of Training
1 Year
Date

Mon, 08/01/2016 - 12:00

10. **Application Questions**

When are you available to start this position? 2026-06-01
Indicators

Indicator 1, 2: Leadership Qualifications, Education, & Experience: Describe the professional experiences, leadership roles, and academic preparation that have shaped your readiness to serve as a district superintendent in a district with variables and demographics aligned with ours. How have these experiences equipped you to lead a school system in a way that improves student outcomes and supports educators?

My professional experiences, leadership roles, and academic preparation have prepared me to successfully serve as superintendent of a district such as Rockdale County Public Schools by equipping me with a unique combination of classroom experience, school turnaround leadership, district and state executive leadership, governance experience, and a deep commitment to improving outcomes for students while supporting educators. Throughout my career, I have served as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, principal, cluster leader, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief Turnaround Officer, allowing me to understand the educational system from every perspective and to lead effectively in districts serving diverse student populations with varying academic, social, emotional, and economic needs. My experiences leading at the classroom, school, cluster, district, and state levels have provided me with a unique perspective on how strong systems, effective leadership, and collaborative governance work together to improve outcomes for students. Currently, as Deputy Superintendent and Chief Turnaround Officer for the Georgia Department of Education, I lead statewide efforts focused on school and district effectiveness, school improvement, alternative education, literacy, and leadership development. In this role, I directly support superintendents, boards of education, principals, and district leadership teams across Georgia in strengthening instructional leadership, improving student achievement, developing high-performing staff, aligning resources, and building systems that sustain long-term success. I supervise more than 250 direct employees and oversee approximately \$150 million in federal school improvement funding while helping districts implement evidence-based strategies that improve outcomes for children. More schools have exited federal identification under our statewide support model than at any other time in Georgia's history. As Georgia's Chief Turnaround Officer, I coach superintendents across the state in all aspects of building effective school systems, including strategic planning, instructional leadership, organizational culture, school safety, student support systems, leadership development, human capital management, operational effectiveness, and continuous improvement processes. This work has provided me with extensive experience supporting districts with demographics and challenges similar to Rockdale County Public Schools. It has also strengthened my ability to balance high expectations with relationship-centered leadership while ensuring that systems remain focused on student achievement, educator support, fiscal responsibility, and organizational stability. One of the most significant leadership lessons I have learned is that sustainable improvement only occurs when districts intentionally remove the variability in quality between schools, classrooms, and student experiences. Under my leadership at the Georgia Department of Education, more than 90% of traditional schools exited federal identification. These improvements were accomplished by shifting the work from compliance to a framework of tiered and tailored support focused on strengthening instruction, leadership capacity, organizational effectiveness, school safety, and whole-child supports. My readiness to lead Rockdale County Schools has also been shaped by my direct experience successfully leading school turnaround efforts in districts with demographics similar to RCPS. Before joining the Georgia Department of Education, I served as principal of Maynard H. Jackson High School in Atlanta Public Schools, where I was recruited to transform the entire Jackson Cluster of nine schools and lead the turnaround of a Priority School identified in the bottom five percent of schools in Georgia. Through a comprehensive focus on instructional improvement, leadership accountability, student engagement, school culture, workforce readiness, and community partnerships, the school exited Priority status and exceeded the state average in academic achievement and progress measures. During my tenure, the graduation rate increased from 53.8% to 77%, school climate improved to four out of five stars, and opportunities for students expanded through 18 Advanced Placement courses, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, dual enrollment partnerships, CTAE and career-readiness experiences, and 68 extracurricular programs. Importantly, this work extended beyond a single school. I worked collaboratively with leaders throughout the entire Jackson Cluster, which included nine elementary, middle, and high schools, to strengthen instructional alignment, leadership development, student transitions, and organizational systems across the feeder pattern. We focused intentionally on improving instructional consistency, leadership collaboration, school culture, literacy support, and long-term student readiness from elementary school through graduation. Similarly, as principal of Sequoyah Middle School and Jonesboro High School in Clayton County Public Schools, I led schools from Needs Improvement status to Distinguished and Rewards recognition by focusing on high-quality instruction, literacy improvement, attendance, school safety, discipline reform, teacher development, and collaborative leadership systems. At Sequoyah Middle School, writing assessment proficiency increased from 41% to 81%, attendance increased from 88.2% to 96.2%, and significant subgroup gains were achieved for Students with Disabilities, ESOL students, and Hispanic students. These experiences taught me how to build systems that improve outcomes while ensuring that educators receive the coaching, support, and professional learning needed to succeed. My academic preparation has further strengthened my readiness for the superintendency. I earned a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Management, an Educational Specialist degree in Instructional Leadership and School Counseling, and a Master of Education in English Education. These programs strengthened my understanding of governance, instructional leadership, organizational management, finance, strategic planning, systems improvement, and change management. In addition to my formal academic preparation, I remain actively engaged in executive leadership and professional learning organizations that strengthen my effectiveness as a superintendent-level leader. I am a member of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the Georgia School Superintendents Association (GSSA), where I collaborate regularly with educational leaders on governance, instructional leadership, organizational effectiveness, workforce readiness, and student achievement. Through AASA, I have presented at national conferences on school turnaround, leadership development, and improving outcomes for federally identified schools. Through GSSA, I support and present to new superintendents across Georgia, helping leaders strengthen systems of continuous improvement and organizational effectiveness. These collective experiences have shaped my leadership philosophy and prepared me to lead a district such as Rockdale County Public Schools. I believe successful districts create environments where students are challenged, supported, and inspired; where educators are valued and developed; where families and communities are true partners; and where decisions are consistently aligned to improving outcomes for children. Rockdale County's commitment to academic excellence, innovative pathways, operational effectiveness, organizational culture, and whole-child support aligns closely with my own leadership values and experiences. Most importantly, my career has demonstrated that I know how to lead improvement at scale while maintaining a relentless focus on people. I lead with visibility, integrity, collaboration, accountability, adaptability, and urgency while ensuring that every decision is grounded in what is best for students and the educators who serve them. I am prepared to build upon Rockdale County's strong foundation while leading the district toward even greater levels of achievement, opportunity, innovation, organizational effectiveness, and community trust.

Indicator 3, 4: Leadership Foundation: School systems are guided by shared beliefs and long-term priorities. Explain how you have worked to develop, communicate, and sustain a district's mission, vision, and core values. How do you ensure these guiding principles influence both strategic decisions and daily practices across the organization?

School systems succeed when their mission, vision, and core values move beyond written statements and become visible in decision-making, organizational culture, leadership actions, and the daily experiences of students, staff, and families. Throughout my career as a teacher, counselor, principal, cluster leader, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief Turnaround Officer, I have focused on building systems where the mission and vision remain clear, consistently communicated, and reflected in strategic priorities, operational decisions, instructional practices, and stakeholder relationships. I believe sustainable improvement occurs when leaders align people, systems, resources, and accountability structures around a shared commitment to student success. My leadership approach begins with listening, collaboration, and relationship-building. I believe leaders must develop and sustain mission and vision through meaningful engagement with students, educators, families, board members, and community stakeholders. When people feel heard, respected, and connected to the work, they remain committed during both opportunities and challenges. Throughout my career, I have intentionally created collaborative cultures where stakeholders understand not only the goals, but also the purpose behind the work. One of the strongest examples of this work occurred during my tenure as principal of Maynard H. Jackson High School. When I arrived, the school ranked among the bottom five percent in the state and carried a Priority School designation. Restoring confidence in the school required more than academic interventions; it required rebuilding trust, establishing a clear vision, and creating shared ownership for student success. To accomplish this, I led a comprehensive SOAR strategic planning process that intentionally included students, teachers, parents, community leaders, business partners, district leaders, and support staff in shaping the future direction of the school. The SOAR process focused on identifying the school's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results. Unlike traditional planning models centered on deficits, SOAR created opportunities for all stakeholder voices to shape both short-term priorities and long-term goals. Through community meetings, staff planning sessions, student forums, and collaborative leadership teams, stakeholders helped define the mission, vision, core values, and strategic priorities that guided the school's turnaround efforts. The process created organizational clarity and built a culture where staff, students, and families understood both the direction of the school and their role in achieving success. We embedded the strategic priorities developed through the SOAR process into daily practices and operational decisions across the school. We restructured curriculum and instructional expectations around acceleration, rigor, and college and career readiness. We expanded Advanced Placement offerings to 18 AP courses, increased extracurricular opportunities to 68 student organizations and activities, strengthened attendance and intervention systems, and established clear expectations for instructional leadership, classroom engagement, and student support. Administrative teams conducted regular classroom walkthroughs and coaching cycles aligned to schoolwide instructional priorities, while teachers collaborated through professional learning communities focused on student achievement, intervention strategies, and data analysis. We also aligned operational systems, budgeting priorities, staffing decisions, and community partnerships to support the school's vision. Through the "Mission Possible Summer Opportunity" initiative, students gained access to employment opportunities, mentors, and community experiences that reinforced the school's commitment to preparing students for life beyond graduation. Families and community members became active participants in the improvement process rather than passive observers. As a result of this aligned and collaborative work, the school exceeded the state average in academic achievement and progress, improved its School Climate Star Rating to four out of five stars, increased the graduation rate from 53.8% to 77%, and exited Priority School status. At Sequoyah Middle School, I built a shared vision centered on high expectations, instructional consistency, accountability, student support, and continuous improvement. Rather than implementing isolated initiatives, we aligned every aspect of the school to common goals. To support this work, I implemented "Pedagogy and Practice," a professional development framework designed to strengthen instructional quality while supporting new and struggling teachers. Teachers participated in collaborative professional learning communities focused on lesson planning, student work analysis, intervention strategies, and data-driven instruction. Administrators and instructional leaders conducted ongoing classroom observations and feedback cycles aligned to the school's instructional priorities and improvement goals. Most importantly, we ensured every staff member understood how daily responsibilities connected to the broader mission of improving student outcomes. As a result of this organizational alignment, writing assessment proficiency increased from 41% to 81%, attendance improved significantly, discipline referrals decreased substantially, and subgroup performance improved dramatically for Students with Disabilities, ESOL students, and Hispanic students. The school moved from Needs Improvement status to Distinguished recognition. At Jonesboro High School, I strengthened organizational coherence, leadership accountability, and staff collaboration. We aligned professional learning, intervention systems, curriculum planning, and operational decisions to the school's improvement priorities. We strengthened communication systems, clarified expectations for instructional practices and school culture, and focused heavily on student support systems. Through this work, the school improved attendance, reduced discipline concerns, strengthened academic performance, and moved from Needs Improvement status to Rewards recognition. At the Georgia Department of Education, I expanded this work statewide by helping redesign Georgia's school improvement framework from one focused primarily on compliance to one centered on continuous improvement, leadership development, instructional effectiveness, organizational stability, and student outcomes. One of the most impactful initiatives involved developing statewide Continuous Improvement Teams that brought together multiple divisions within the Department of Education to provide aligned and coordinated support to districts and schools. Rather than operating in silos, literacy specialists, school improvement leaders, federal program leaders, special education staff, and student support teams worked collaboratively to help districts align resources, staffing, professional learning, and operational systems to student needs. This work reinforced one of the most important leadership lessons I have learned: organizations sustain improvement when leaders intentionally align mission, vision, resources, staffing, communication, professional learning, and accountability systems. Sustaining a district's mission and vision requires leaders to operationalize core values in visible and measurable ways. Strategic plans, budgets, staffing decisions, professional learning, school safety initiatives, communication systems, and accountability measures should all reflect the district's priorities and values. Students, staff, and families should experience the district's mission not only in presentations and strategic documents, but also in classroom instruction, school culture, leadership actions, and daily interactions throughout the organization. An essential part of sustaining this work involves maintaining a strong relationship between the superintendent and the Board of Education. Effective governance depends on trust, transparency, communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to student success. Throughout my career, I have worked closely with local boards of education and the Georgia State Board of Education to align priorities, communicate progress, navigate challenges, and maintain focus on improving outcomes for children. In my current role, I regularly present statewide improvement data, strategic recommendations, funding priorities, and operational updates to the Georgia State Board of Education while supporting superintendents across Georgia in strengthening governance relationships, organizational effectiveness, and strategic planning. I understand the importance of the team governance model and the distinction between the governance role of the board and the operational leadership role of the superintendent. The superintendent's responsibility is to operationalize the board's vision through transparent leadership, strong systems, measurable outcomes, and consistent communication. Strong superintendent-board relationships create organizational stability, strengthen public confidence, and keep districts focused on long-term student success. Rockdale County Public Schools' focus on academic excellence, innovation, operational effectiveness, organizational culture, and whole-child support aligns strongly with my leadership philosophy. If selected as superintendent, I would work collaboratively with the Board of Education, district leadership teams, educators, families, and community stakeholders to ensure the district's mission, vision, and core values drive every strategic decision and daily interaction across the organization. My goal would be to build a culture where students thrive, educators feel valued and supported, families feel connected and respected, and the community maintains confidence in the direction and leadership of the school system.

Indicator 5, 6, 7, 12:
Leadership for Learning:
Student achievement is the central responsibility of every school system. Describe how you have supported school leaders and teachers in improving instructional quality and student outcomes across a district. What systems or practices have you used to monitor progress, address achievement gaps, and promote continuous improvement in settings similar to this one?

Student achievement has been the central focus of my work throughout my career as a teacher, counselor, principal, cluster leader, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief Turnaround Officer. I believe high-performing school systems establish coherent instructional frameworks where curriculum, instruction, assessment, intervention, professional learning, and operational decisions are aligned to improve outcomes for all students. Throughout my leadership roles, I have focused on building systems that strengthen instructional quality, support educators, eliminate achievement gaps, and create cultures of high expectations, accountability, and continuous improvement. Currently, as Georgia's Deputy Superintendent and Chief Turnaround Officer, I lead statewide efforts supporting federally identified schools and districts in strengthening instructional leadership, Tier 1 instruction, MTSS implementation, literacy practices, intervention systems, attendance improvement, school climate, and continuous improvement processes. In this role, I support superintendents, principal supervisors, principals, instructional leaders, and teachers in building systems that improve instructional effectiveness and student outcomes while ensuring schools maintain high expectations for every learner. A major focus of my leadership has been strengthening Tier 1 instruction through data-informed decision-making, instructional monitoring, and aligned Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). I believe intervention systems should enhance—not replace—high-quality core instruction. Sustainable improvement occurs when districts intentionally reduce variability in instructional quality between classrooms and schools so that every student experiences rigorous instruction, meaningful engagement, and strong support every day. Throughout my career, I have consistently used multiple forms of data—including formative assessments, benchmark assessments, subgroup performance data, attendance trends, discipline data, classroom observations, and student engagement indicators—to guide instructional decisions, allocate resources, identify achievement gaps, and monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices and interventions. I believe data should drive action, not compliance. Effective leaders use data continuously to strengthen instruction, respond to student needs in real time, and improve organizational decision-making at every level. Key systems and practices I have implemented to improve instructional quality and student outcomes include:

- Establishing clear instructional expectations aligned to standards and student outcomes
- Conducting regular classroom observations and instructional walkthroughs with actionable feedback
- Monitoring evidence of student engagement, rigor, differentiation, and learning during instruction
- Using collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs) to analyze student work, assessment data, and intervention effectiveness
- Providing differentiated coaching and professional learning for leaders and teachers
- Implementing MTSS frameworks that integrate academic, behavioral, attendance, and social-emotional supports
- Aligning interventions and resources to identified student needs
- Monitoring subgroup performance to address achievement gaps and ensure equitable access to opportunities
- Creating systems focused on attendance, school climate, school safety, and whole child support.

As principal, I implemented these systems while leading the schools from Needs Improvement status to Distinguished recognition. One of our primary priorities was strengthening instructional rigor and literacy achievement across all classrooms while establishing a culture of non-negotiable high expectations for every student. We focused intentionally on ensuring that all students—including Students with Disabilities, multilingual learners, struggling learners, and advanced students—had access to rigorous instruction, meaningful support, and opportunities for success. To support this work, we established collaborative planning structures, professional learning communities, intervention systems, and ongoing data analysis processes aligned to school improvement priorities and student learning standards. I also implemented the “Pedagogy and Practice” professional development framework designed to support new and struggling teachers through coaching, modeling, instructional feedback, and classroom support. A major instructional expectation throughout the school was that lessons move beyond low-level recall and engage students in critical thinking, problem-solving, writing, discussion, and real-world application of learning. Teachers were expected to design lessons aligned to Depth of Knowledge (DOK) expectations that challenged students to analyze, explain reasoning, collaborate, and apply learning at higher levels. During classroom observations and instructional walkthroughs, administrators focused not only on teacher actions, but also on evidence of student learning, engagement, rigor, questioning strategies, differentiation, and meaningful instructional tasks. We also strengthened our MTSS processes to ensure students received timely academic and behavioral interventions based on data and progress monitoring. Teachers and leadership teams regularly reviewed formative assessments, subgroup data, attendance trends, and intervention results to identify barriers and adjust support for students in real time. These systems created stronger instructional consistency, greater accountability, and more targeted support for students across the school. As a result of these efforts, writing assessment proficiency increased from 41% to 81%, attendance increased from 88.2% to 96.2%, discipline referrals decreased significantly, and student group performance improved substantially for Students with Disabilities, ESOL students, and Hispanic students. Sequoyah Middle School achieved Distinguished recognition and was recognized as a Georgia Safe School. These experiences reinforced my belief that rigorous instruction, strong Tier 1 systems, positive school culture, targeted interventions, and high expectations for all students must work together to sustain achievement gains. Addressing achievement gaps among student groups has remained a central priority throughout my career. I believe districts must intentionally monitor student group performance and ensure all students have access to rigorous instruction, targeted interventions, advanced coursework, and individualized support systems. At both the school and state levels, I have worked to strengthen support for Students with Disabilities, multilingual learners, economically disadvantaged students, struggling learners, and high-performing students through strong Tier 1 instruction, intervention systems, acceleration opportunities, and differentiated support. At the Georgia Department of Education, I helped create Student Success Grants designed to strengthen supports and infrastructure for Students with Disabilities in Georgia schools. I also lead statewide initiatives focused on structured literacy, literacy coaching, attendance improvement, graduation support, and wraparound services designed to remove barriers impacting student achievement and engagement. At the same time, I strongly believe districts must intentionally support high-performing students by expanding access to Advanced Placement coursework, gifted education, dual enrollment, CTAE pathways, work-based learning opportunities, and career readiness initiatives that prepare students for college, careers, and global competitiveness. I also believe student achievement and school safety are deeply connected. Students learn best when they feel physically safe, emotionally supported, connected to adults, and engaged in positive school cultures. Throughout my leadership roles, I have prioritized proactive systems for attendance, discipline, school climate, mental health support, and wraparound services because academic success depends upon safe and supportive learning environments. Equally important, I believe the Board of Education plays a critical role in sustaining high levels of student achievement through clear governance, shared priorities, and accountability for results. As superintendent, I would work closely with the Rockdale County Board of Education to establish measurable goals, monitor student outcome data transparently, communicate progress consistently, and ensure district resources and instructional priorities remain aligned to the district's mission and vision. Rockdale County Public Schools' commitment to strengthening instructional leadership, improving student achievement, supporting educators, expanding innovative academic pathways, and supporting the whole child aligns strongly with my leadership philosophy and experiences. If selected as superintendent, I would work collaboratively with the Board of Education, district leaders, principals, teachers, families, and community stakeholders to strengthen systems that ensure all students experience rigorous instruction, meaningful engagement, strong support, and opportunities to achieve at the highest levels.

Indicator 8, 9, 11: Leadership for Management: Explain how you have managed district operations, staffing, and financial planning in a way that strengthens organizational effectiveness and supports student success. How do you ensure that resources are used strategically and responsibly?

Effective leadership for management requires the ability to align operations, staffing, financial resources, governance, and organizational systems to a district's mission while maintaining a relentless focus on student success. Throughout my career as a principal, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Turnaround Officer, and state executive leader, I have successfully led complex organizations through school improvement efforts, operational challenges, organizational restructuring, staffing transitions, financial planning, and strategic change initiatives by ensuring that every decision remained centered on improving outcomes for students and strengthening the long-term effectiveness of the organization. I believe strong operational leadership is ultimately about stewardship, which includes stewarding people, resources, systems, and public trust responsibly, transparently, and strategically. Successful districts create organizational coherence where budgeting, staffing, professional learning, school safety, instructional priorities, student support, and operational systems work together to advance the district's mission and vision. Throughout my career, I have intentionally focused on building systems that increase efficiency, strengthen accountability, support employees, improve organizational stability, and maximize opportunities for students. Currently, as Georgia's Deputy Superintendent and Chief Turnaround Officer, I oversee statewide school improvement operations and the strategic use of approximately \$150 million in federal school improvement funding while directly supervising more than 250 employees and coordinating additional regional and contracted staff across Georgia. In this role, I collaborate directly with superintendents, boards of education, finance officers, and district leadership teams to align staffing, operational systems, instructional priorities, school safety initiatives, and funding to measurable student outcomes and long-term organizational effectiveness. As aforementioned, one of the most significant operational leadership initiatives I led at the Georgia Department of Education was redesigning Georgia's school improvement framework from a compliance-driven structure to a tiered and tailored support model focused on organizational effectiveness, instructional improvement, leadership development, strategic resource alignment, and continuous improvement. This required restructuring systems, reallocating resources, redesigning support structures, strengthening accountability measures, and ensuring funding decisions were tied directly to district and school needs. Through this work, more schools have made required improvements to exited federal identification than at any other time in Georgia's history. Additionally, in my Chief Turnaround Officer role, I serve as a special advisor supporting Georgia school districts experiencing significant operational and financial challenges. In this role, I work directly with district and board leadership to strengthen fiscal oversight, improve operational systems, stabilize staffing structures, support long-term financial planning, align organizational priorities, and ensure responsible stewardship of public resources. This work has included supporting audit completion processes, budget realignment, staffing analyses, operational restructuring, cash-flow planning, transportation efficiencies, leadership support, strategic staffing decisions, and resource allocation designed to improve organizational stability while protecting instructional quality and student services. These experiences have strengthened my ability to lead complex systems through difficult decisions with transparency, accountability, collaboration, and a continued focus on student success. They have also reinforced the importance of maintaining public trust, communicating openly with governing boards and stakeholders, and ensuring that operational decisions remain aligned to the district's long-term vision and financial sustainability. My leadership philosophy is that resources should never be allocated simply because "that is how it has always been done." Resources must be intentionally aligned to strategic priorities, measurable outcomes, student needs, workforce readiness, school safety, and organizational goals. I believe effective financial stewardship requires balancing innovation with responsibility while ensuring transparency, accountability, efficiency, and sustainability. Throughout my leadership roles, I have consistently used several key practices to ensure operational effectiveness and responsible resource management:

- Aligning budgets, staffing, and operational decisions directly to district strategic priorities and student needs
- Conducting regular reviews of organizational structures, staffing patterns, and program effectiveness
- Using data to evaluate return on investment and operational impact
- Prioritizing funding for instructional quality, school safety, student support, workforce readiness, and leadership development
- Building leadership pipelines and succession plans that strengthen long-term organizational stability.
- Investing in recruitment, onboarding, mentoring, and retention systems that support high-quality staff.
- Monitoring implementation and outcomes through accountability systems and continuous improvement cycles
- Maintaining transparent communication with boards, stakeholders, and leadership teams regarding priorities, progress, and challenges
- Ensuring compliance and fiscal responsibility while remaining focused on innovation, opportunity, and student success

I also believe that organizational effectiveness depends heavily on attracting, developing, and retaining strong people. Throughout my career, I have focused intentionally on building leadership capacity and creating supportive professional cultures where employees feel valued, developed, heard, and connected to the mission of the organization. Strong staffing systems are essential to student success because stable, high-performing organizations require strong teachers, principals, support staff, and leadership teams. As principal of Maynard H. Jackson High School in Atlanta Public Schools, I inherited a school facing significant academic, operational, and organizational challenges. I led a comprehensive turnaround effort that required restructuring staffing, strengthening leadership accountability, redesigning operational systems, improving school safety, rebuilding community trust, and aligning financial resources to instructional priorities and student support. Through strategic staffing and resource allocation, we expanded Advanced Placement opportunities, implemented the International Baccalaureate Diploma, strengthened CTAE and career-readiness opportunities, increased extracurricular engagement to sixty-eight student programs, improved school climate, and significantly increased graduation rates and academic performance. As aforementioned, my work extended beyond one school. I collaborated closely with leaders throughout the entire Jackson Cluster, which included nine elementary, middle, and high schools, to strengthen operational alignment, leadership collaboration, staffing support systems, instructional coherence, and organizational effectiveness across the feeder pattern. This work reinforced my understanding that districts improve when schools operate within aligned systems focused on consistency, collaboration, accountability, and student success. Similarly, at Sequoyah Middle School and Jonesboro High School in Clayton County, I managed staffing, scheduling, budgeting, school operations, facilities, safety, instructional systems, and school improvement initiatives while leading both schools from Needs Improvement status to Distinguished and Rewards recognition. These experiences strengthened my understanding of how operational effectiveness, staffing stability, school culture, instructional leadership, and fiscal stewardship must work together to sustain improvement and support student achievement. I have also worked extensively with local boards of education and the Georgia State Board of Education to align operational priorities, strategic planning, funding decisions, accountability measures, and district goals to improved student outcomes. In my current role, I regularly present funding recommendations, operational priorities, strategic initiatives, and performance data to the State Board of Education to ensure resources are being used effectively, transparently, and responsibly to support districts and schools across Georgia. These experiences have strengthened my understanding of governance, policy implementation, fiscal stewardship, and the importance of maintaining public trust through transparency and communication. I believe the superintendent's responsibility is to operationalize the board's vision through strong systems, strategic planning, transparent communication, measurable outcomes, and responsible stewardship of district resources. Strong superintendent-board relationships create organizational stability and help ensure that operational, staffing, and financial decisions remain focused on what is best for students. I also believe students learn best in districts that are safe, stable, well-managed, fiscally responsible, and strategically focused. Effective operational leadership creates the conditions necessary for high-quality instruction, strong school culture, employee retention, and student success. Rockdale County Public Schools' commitment to operational effectiveness, fiscal responsibility, talent development, safe and supportive learning environments, and academic excellence aligns strongly with my leadership philosophy and experiences. If selected as superintendent, I would work collaboratively with the Rockdale County Board of Education, district leadership teams, staff, families, and community stakeholders to ensure that Rockdale County Public Schools continues to operate with integrity, transparency, strategic focus, operational excellence, and a relentless commitment to supporting students, educators, and families at the highest level.

Indicator 10: Leadership for Engagement and Communication: Strong districts cultivate productive relationships with families, community partners, and other stakeholders. Describe the strategies you use to build trust, maintain transparency, and encourage meaningful collaboration with the broader community in support of district initiatives.

Strong school systems are built through strong relationships, consistent communication, and meaningful collaboration with the communities they serve. Throughout my career as a teacher, counselor, principal, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief Turnaround Officer, I have learned that trust is not built through words alone. Trust is built through visibility, transparency, responsiveness, follow-through, and a genuine commitment to engaging stakeholders as partners in the success of students and schools. I believe effective superintendents must lead with openness, accessibility, and authenticity while creating systems that encourage collaboration, shared ownership, and public confidence in the direction of the district. My approach to engagement and communication begins with listening. Before organizations can move forward successfully, students, staff, families, board members, and community stakeholders must feel heard, respected, informed, and valued. Throughout my leadership roles, I have prioritized creating opportunities for two-way communication and collaborative problem-solving because I believe the strongest decisions are made when leaders intentionally seek input from the people most impacted by those decisions. As Georgia's Deputy Superintendent and Chief Turnaround Officer, I regularly work alongside superintendents, boards of education, RESAs, state agencies, community organizations, higher education institutions, and business partners to support district improvement efforts across the state. This work has strengthened my ability to build partnerships among diverse stakeholder groups while helping districts navigate both opportunities and challenges with transparency and collaboration. One of the most significant examples of community engagement and collaborative leadership in my career has been my work supporting statewide wraparound and whole-child initiatives designed to remove barriers to student success. Through strategic partnerships with healthcare organizations, nonprofits, universities, and state agencies, we expanded school-based health centers, attendance partnerships, literacy initiatives, student support services, and mental health resources for schools and communities across Georgia. This work required building trust among multiple stakeholder groups, aligning resources across agencies, communicating openly about student and community needs, and ensuring districts understood how to leverage community partnerships to strengthen outcomes for children. I have also worked extensively with local boards of education and the Georgia State Board of Education to maintain transparency, strengthen communication, and build alignment around strategic priorities, district needs, and student outcomes. In my current role, I regularly present progress monitoring data, strategic recommendations, funding priorities, and district support plans to the State Board of Education while also supporting superintendents in strengthening communication and collaboration with their local boards and communities. These experiences reinforced my belief that strong governance relationships and clear communication are essential to building organizational stability and public confidence. As a school leader, I intentionally worked to create cultures where schools were viewed as welcoming centers of community support and engagement. At Sequoyah Middle School and Jonesboro High School in Clayton County, I focused on strengthening relationships with families and community stakeholders by increasing communication, creating opportunities for parent involvement, and building partnerships that supported both academic and non-academic student needs. These efforts contributed to stronger attendance, improved school culture, increased community confidence, and higher levels of student achievement. I also believe visibility matters greatly in leadership. Throughout my career, I have worked intentionally to maintain a strong presence in schools and communities because relationships are strengthened when stakeholders see leaders actively engaged, approachable, and invested in the success of students and staff. I believe superintendents must be highly visible and actively engaged throughout the community—not only during celebrations, but also during challenges, transitions, and moments requiring trust, reassurance, and stability. Throughout my leadership roles, I have consistently used several key strategies to strengthen engagement, communication, and community trust:

- Maintaining visible, accessible, and relationship-centered leadership
- Prioritizing proactive, transparent, and consistent communication
- Creating opportunities for stakeholder voice and feedback before major decisions are made
- Building collaborative partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, healthcare providers, and higher education institutions
- Engaging families as true partners in student success
- Communicating district goals, progress, challenges, and expectations clearly and consistently
- Celebrating student, staff, and community successes regularly
- Ensuring communication systems are responsive, respectful, and inclusive of diverse populations
- Creating structures that encourage collaboration across schools, departments, and community organizations
- Following through consistently on commitments and maintaining accountability with stakeholders.

I also believe effective communication becomes especially important during periods of change or challenge. In my leadership roles, I have often worked in environments requiring organizational improvement, operational restructuring, or strategic change. During those times, I have prioritized transparency, empathy, consistency, and direct communication while ensuring stakeholders understood both the reasons behind decisions and the long-term vision guiding the work. I believe communities are more likely to support district initiatives when they trust leadership, understand the purpose behind decisions, and feel included in the process. Rockdale County Public Schools' commitment to collaboration, transparency, innovation, organizational culture, and community engagement aligns strongly with my leadership philosophy and experiences. If selected as superintendent, I would work intentionally to build strong relationships with students, families, staff, board members, business leaders, faith-based organizations, and community partners to ensure that Rockdale County Public Schools continues to strengthen public trust, increase stakeholder engagement, and create meaningful opportunities for collaboration in support of student success.

Indicator 13, 14: Leadership and Personal Qualities: Superintendents must lead through both opportunities and challenges. Reflect on the leadership values and personal qualities that guide your work. How do you demonstrate integrity/accountability, adaptability, and self-awareness when making decisions that affect students, staff, and the community?

Leadership is grounded in service, integrity, accountability, communication, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to doing what is best for students. Throughout my career as a teacher, counselor, principal, Deputy Superintendent, and Chief Turnaround Officer, I have learned that leadership is tested most during periods of challenge, uncertainty, and change. During those moments, people look for leaders who are calm, trustworthy, transparent, thoughtful, and willing to make difficult decisions while keeping students at the center of every action. Integrity and accountability are the foundation of my leadership philosophy. I believe trust is earned through consistency, honesty, ethical decision-making, and follow-through. Throughout my career, I have worked intentionally to create cultures where students, employees, families, and community stakeholders know that decisions are made thoughtfully, professionally, and in the best interests of children. I also believe leaders must hold themselves accountable before expecting accountability from others. Effective leadership requires the courage to acknowledge challenges honestly, take responsibility for outcomes, and remain focused on solutions rather than excuses. One of the most defining experiences of my career was leading Maynard H. Jackson High School during a period when Atlanta Public Schools was rebuilding public trust following the district cheating scandal. When I became principal, the school faced low morale, declining confidence, and Priority School identification in the bottom five percent of schools in Georgia. Rather than focusing solely on improving test scores, I focused first on rebuilding trust, restoring belief in the school, strengthening relationships, and creating a culture of accountability, stability, and high expectations. This required visible leadership, open communication, and difficult decisions related to staffing, instructional expectations, school culture, and organizational systems. I worked intentionally to create transparency with students, staff, parents, alumni, and community stakeholders while maintaining a clear focus on improving opportunities and outcomes for students. Through collaboration, consistency, and a student-centered approach, the school improved academically, strengthened school climate, increased graduation rates, and restored confidence in the direction of the school. That experience reinforced my belief that leadership during difficult times requires resilience, emotional intelligence, humility, and the ability to unify people around a shared vision, even during uncertainty. Adaptability has also been essential throughout my leadership journey. Public education continues to evolve rapidly, and effective leaders must be willing to rethink systems, adjust strategies, and respond proactively to changing needs while maintaining organizational stability and focus. Throughout my career, I have often been called upon to lead in situations requiring organizational change, continuous improvement, and strategic problem-solving. As Georgia's Deputy Superintendent and Chief Turnaround Officer, I support districts and schools across the state with varying needs, challenges, demographics, and levels of performance. This work requires flexibility, collaboration, and the ability to adapt leadership strategies based on the unique context of each district while still maintaining high expectations and accountability. I have learned that successful leaders do not apply one solution to every challenge. Instead, they listen carefully, analyze needs thoughtfully, engage stakeholders, and build systems responsive to the realities facing students, employees, and communities. One example of this adaptability was helping lead the redesign of Georgia's statewide school improvement framework into a system focused on tiered and tailored support, instructional leadership, organizational effectiveness, and continuous improvement. This work required collaboration with superintendents, boards of education, state leaders, and school teams across Georgia while remaining responsive to feedback and evolving district needs. Through this work, more schools exited federal identification than at any other time in Georgia's history. Self-awareness is another leadership quality that I value deeply. I believe effective leaders continuously reflect on their leadership practices, seek feedback, acknowledge areas for growth, and remain committed to learning. Throughout my career, I have intentionally surrounded myself with strong teams and diverse perspectives because I understand leadership is strengthened through collaboration and openness to different viewpoints. I believe leaders must remain confident enough to make difficult decisions while also remaining humble enough to listen, adjust, and continue growing. I also believe communication is one of the most important responsibilities of effective leadership. During times of success, challenge, change, or uncertainty, stakeholders deserve clear, honest, timely, and consistent communication. Throughout my career, I have prioritized transparent communication with students, employees, families, governing boards, and community stakeholders because trust is strengthened when people feel informed, respected, and included in the process. I believe effective leaders communicate with clarity, empathy, professionalism, and consistency while remaining accessible and responsive to the needs of the organization and community. Another important aspect of my leadership philosophy is maintaining strong relationships with governing boards and community stakeholders. Throughout my career, I have worked closely with local boards of education and the Georgia State Board of Education to support school improvement, strategic planning, organizational effectiveness, and student achievement initiatives. These experiences strengthened my understanding of governance, accountability, and the importance of maintaining open communication, transparency, mutual respect, and clearly defined roles between the superintendent and board of education. I believe strong governance relationships create organizational stability, strengthen public confidence, and allow districts to remain focused on long-term student success. I also believe leadership requires visibility and a strong connection to the community. Throughout my career, I have prioritized being present in schools, classrooms, extracurricular activities, community events, and stakeholder meetings because visible leadership builds trust, strengthens relationships, and demonstrates commitment to the people served. Whether leading school turnaround efforts, statewide initiatives, or district support work, I have consistently focused on building collaborative cultures where students feel supported, employees feel valued, and families feel connected to the work of the district. Most importantly, my leadership is grounded in a genuine belief in people and in the potential of every child. I believe students deserve leaders who advocate for them relentlessly, educators deserve leaders who support and develop them, and communities deserve leaders who communicate honestly, lead ethically, and remain focused on creating opportunities for all students to succeed. Rockdale County Public Schools' commitment to academic excellence, operational effectiveness, collaboration, organizational culture, and student success aligns strongly with both my professional experiences and personal leadership values. If selected as superintendent, I would lead with integrity, accountability, transparency, communication, adaptability, humility, visibility, and an unwavering commitment to serving the students, staff, families, and community of Rockdale County with excellence, stability, and care.

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

My experiences, results, and leadership philosophy uniquely position me to serve as the next superintendent of Rockdale County Public Schools during a critical time of opportunity and growth for the district. Throughout my career, I have consistently led schools, divisions, and statewide initiatives that required strategic vision, organizational improvement, relationship-building, and measurable academic results. I understand the complexities of leading educational systems through change, and I have a proven record of producing sustainable outcomes while building trust with students, staff, families, boards of education, and community stakeholders. What distinguishes my leadership is not simply experience, but evidence of transformational results in environments that required strong leadership, strategic alignment, and the ability to move entire organizations forward. I have repeatedly led schools and systems facing significant academic, operational, and organizational challenges and helped transform them into higher-performing, student-centered learning communities. As principal of Sequoyah Middle School in Clayton County Public Schools, I led the school from Needs Improvement status to Distinguished status within three years. Student writing proficiency increased from 41% to 81%, attendance rose from 88.2% to 96.2%, and academic performance increased significantly across all content areas and student groups. Students with Disabilities, Hispanic students, and ESOL students experienced some of the largest gains in the district. Discipline referrals decreased dramatically, and the school earned recognition as a Georgia Safe School and as one of the Southern Regional Education Board's top-performing middle schools for academic growth. At Maynard H. Jackson High School, I was selected to lead one of Georgia's most visible turnaround efforts following the Atlanta cheating scandal. The school was identified in the bottom five percent of schools in the state and faced declining trust, low morale, poor academic outcomes, and community skepticism. Through strong instructional leadership, strategic staffing, accountability systems, stakeholder engagement, and a relentless focus on student success, the school exited Priority status and exceeded state averages in several accountability measures. The graduation rate increased from 53.8% to 77%, Advanced Placement opportunities expanded from limited access to 18 AP courses, school climate improved to four out of five stars, and more than sixty-eight extracurricular activities were created to reconnect students to their school community and future opportunities. Equally important, I implemented the SOAR strategic planning process — Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results — to ensure students, families, teachers, business partners, and community stakeholders had a voice in establishing both short- and long-term goals for the school. That work created a culture of ownership, transparency, collaboration, and accountability that sustained improvement over time. Rockdale County deserves a superintendent who understands that meaningful progress only occurs when the community is authentically engaged and united around a shared vision for students. In my current role as Deputy Superintendent and Chief Turnaround Officer with the Georgia Department of Education, I support school districts across Georgia in the areas of school improvement, district effectiveness, leadership development, professional learning, alternative education, and organizational improvement. I have worked directly with superintendents and local boards of education throughout Georgia to address some of the most complex educational challenges facing districts today, including improving student achievement, increasing attendance, strengthening literacy outcomes, stabilizing leadership teams, improving teacher retention, supporting struggling schools, and aligning resources to strategic priorities. These experiences have prepared me to immediately support the continued growth and success of Rockdale County Public Schools. I understand how to analyze district performance data, identify barriers to student success, align systems and resources, build leadership capacity, and establish clear accountability measures that produce results. I also understand the importance of balancing academic excellence with operational effectiveness, financial responsibility, school safety, community trust, and student well-being. The Board of Education deserves a superintendent who not only understands educational leadership, but also understands governance, collaboration, communication, and partnership. Throughout my career, I have worked closely with local and state board members to support strategic planning, governance training, district improvement efforts, accountability monitoring, and community engagement initiatives. I value transparent communication, strong governance practices, and healthy board-superintendent relationships built on trust, integrity, professionalism, and a shared commitment to student success. Rockdale County Public Schools deserves a superintendent who can inspire confidence while also delivering measurable outcomes. My leadership reflects a balance of vision and execution. I know how to build systems, strengthen culture, develop leaders, improve instruction, support teachers, engage families, and move organizations from planning to implementation and from implementation to results. Most importantly, I believe in students. Every child deserves access to high-quality instruction, strong support systems, safe learning environments, and opportunities that prepare them for success in college, careers, and life. My entire career has been dedicated to ensuring students - regardless of background, zip code, or circumstance - have access to schools that believe in their potential and are committed to helping them succeed. I am confident that my experiences leading transformational improvement efforts at the school, district, and state levels have prepared me to successfully lead Rockdale County Public Schools into its next chapter of excellence, stability, innovation, and student success. I would be honored to partner with the Board of Education, staff, students, families, and community to build upon the district's strengths and ensure every student in Rockdale County has the opportunity to thrive.

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