

September 22, 2015

Human Resources Department

Osceola County Public Schools
817 Bill Beck Boulevard
Kissimmee, FL 34744

Dear Hiring Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to be considered as Superintendent of Osceola County Public Schools and discuss why I am the right person to lead such an exciting district. I am a passionate, energetic leader with experience at all levels in education which could be leveraged to continue and support the vision of the School Board and district stakeholders. I have a record of success in transformative change done positively as well as a strong belief and foundation in community work.

It is an exciting time to work for Osceola County Public Schools. With a variety of different programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, there are incredible opportunities for students to excel both academically and socially. However, I am most compelled by the population that the district serves. A significant number of your students are English Language Learners; a large proportion of enrolled students are low-income; there is considerable attention needed with your at-risk youth, including foster and homeless students and families; and there is a large group of special needs students who require thoughtful and purposeful supports. This is a population that I have experience serving successfully and to which I am deeply committed. The district clearly reflects its priorities in serving all students, engaging families, and providing for a safe and strong culture and climate on each of its campuses. Osceola County Public Schools seems like a district that values parent engagement, supports strong academic programs, recognizes the value of community partnerships, understands the value of enrichment and afterschool programming, and wants to meet the needs of all of its students individually. I also believe that the district values strong financial management, strategic thinking and problem solving, and ensuring that all students – regardless of background – have opportunities for immense success. These are the same values that I deeply hold and would be honored to serve as its leader to ensure they are realized.

I specifically want to serve as Superintendent in Osceola County Public Schools because I share the deep commitment outlined by the School Board to the core values of academic excellence and strong school communities. As you will note below, my professional career, and personal history, reflect a deep investment in, and commitment to, these areas. Further, I have a strong history in communities and districts with high populations of English Language Learners and know the importance of supporting this group of students, having done so successfully as a principal and at the district office. In reviewing the implementation priorities for the district, I also noted that there was a clear prioritization on strong programs and supports, effective systems (including accountability and reporting), positive school culture, and operational efficiencies. I was excited to see emphasis on the importance of structural expectations (well-maintained facilities, for example, communicate a value to students) as well as the value of meaningful engagement for families as a key lever in boosting achievement. Further, the sense of building opportunities for children at all grade levels and providing them with choice in identifying schools that best fit their needs, is critical to continuing to meet the ambitious targets that the district has set for itself.

I have a variety of experiences that demonstrate my unique qualifications as the Superintendent of Osceola County Public Schools. I got my start in education as a teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools, teaching history and economics. During my time there, I saw the impact that inequitable funding, poor use of resources, deteriorating facilities, and lack of choice had on students and families. Even with some challenges, my students grew multiple grade levels in the quality of their writing; the school created strong plans to expand college, career and technical opportunities for students that improved overall performance; and my economics classes placed first and third in a citywide competition for small business development through Verizon. Simply, I experienced firsthand the

challenges that we face in urban public schools, as well as the possibilities and potential that exist in each and every child and classroom.

When I relocated to California, I recognized that in order to be more effective on behalf of the students currently being served in our nation's public schools, I would need to become better versed in the skills that I saw as essential for true district leadership. This prompted my transition to a company called McMaster-Carr. As a large and agile, but relatively humble organization in a land of corporate giants (McMaster, for example, was the basis for Amazon's distribution model), we worked at an incredible pace to keep our edge over the competition. McMaster focused intently on pioneering and testing new processes and improvement innovations as a way to continue to hone and perfect already effective systems. This experience highlighted for me the importance of innovating on already strong ideas, as well as the need for districts to look both at best practices and untried, but high potential ideas.

Wanting to transition back into education, I moved to my hometown of Sacramento to start Capitol Collegiate Academy in a community near to where I grew-up through a fellowship with Building Excellent Schools. While developing the school, I also served as the Director of Student Achievement and Senior Consultant to the Superintendent for St. HOPE Public Schools. This role gave me the opportunity to develop a strategic plan and district-wide systems for human resources, teacher support and development, as well as targeted programs for different student groups (including gifted, at-risk, special education, homeless and foster). I am incredibly proud of the work that we accomplished at St. HOPE – achieving the most growth in the state when compared to similar schools. Similarly, in the first year of Capitol Collegiate where I was founder and leader, students scored in the top 10% nationwide on the Terra Nova and 100% of students grew more than one grade level in reading.

My work at Capitol Collegiate, as well as with St. HOPE, drove strong student achievement at all grade levels and opened an opportunity for me to transition to Sacramento City Unified (45,000+ students) as well as successfully run for County Board of Education (constituency of over 180,000 people). I found both of these opportunities to be critical steps as I looked to find ways to effectively change the trajectory of urban public schools at scale. With a keen understanding of the challenges facing the field, I joined Sacramento City Unified to manage a new accountability system, as well as the assessment, research, and principal development programs within the district. Further, I was able to lead our efforts as one of the CORE districts – the only example in the country of districts creating a consortium to qualify for ESEA flexibility – which promoted the inclusion of Social-Emotional Learning in classrooms. I was also a lead in the Pathways initiative that created a partnership between the district and its local community colleges and university to support students getting to – and through – higher education. This included the development of a plan to give students access to information and supports starting in third grade that would later allow them to clearly understand the financial, academic, and social resources available to them; it provided information, visibility, and access to a high-needs population. Through these roles and responsibilities, I gained knowledge, skills, and expertise in a variety of education sectors from academics and programs to operations and finance to external supports.

My experiences in Sacramento fostered connections to work in many areas of the country and led to a position being offered at the Delaware Department of Education to do similar work at a statewide scale, serving over 130,000 students. This provided yet another chance to see if there was greater leverage to be used at the state level. I transitioned to Delaware as Associate Secretary of Education to develop a statewide accountability system. Utilizing a comprehensive stakeholder feedback process, we have been able to develop a relatively progressive and forward-looking accountability system, and have also made significant steps in how we look at assessment, how we navigate complex data systems, and how we approach the difficult work of turning around our lowest performing schools. I also lead the work around accountability, assessment, school turnaround, Title I, and federal programs and grants, and am responsible for managing the performance of each of the state's districts, and schools. This experience has given me a strong perspective on the full functions and requirements of our districts, including many of the complex compliance, financial, and programmatic needs.

My background and experience give some indication of my unique value proposition. It's rare to find candidates with experience at all levels of education - teacher and leader in traditional public and charter schools; district, county and state leadership; elected school board; parent. Each of these roles require a different lens and a varied set of skills in order to be successful. I have been able to adeptly navigate all of them in order to form meaningful partnerships and drive towards strong outcomes on behalf of the students I serve.

The work of a Superintendent is all-encompassing – a successful candidate should have strengths and competencies in areas that range across all sectors that any large company or organization would have including finance, human resources, operations, program and strategic planning. The leader should also demonstrate a strong and compelling vision that promotes incredible outcomes for students. Knowing this, the role of Superintendent clearly aligns with my strengths and experiences. I love fast-paced environments and challenging problems to solve. I've had experience navigating highly political environments. I have successfully developed and executed on strategic plans for both small and large organizations. I have developed and benchmarked against rigorous performance metrics. I have worked to engage and forge relationships with a variety of different partners. **Most importantly, I am deeply committed to students and ensuring that each and every child has access to an excellent education. It is my passion, my commitment, and my life's work.**

I am both motivated and compelled by the work that is ahead with Osceola County Public Schools and hope to be a part it.

Many Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Schwinn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Penny Schwinn

PENNY SCHWINN

916-217-1061 • pennyschwinn@gmail.com

SUMMARY

Energetic leader with 10+ years of experience in multiple layers of public education, policy, and stakeholder engagement with demonstrated success in mobilizing organizational resources in pursuit of strategic goals. Specializes in complex initiatives with aggressive goals in dynamic environments. Passionate about delivering transformational change by exploring and refining best practices, building or fortifying systems, then applying innovative and progressive solutions to achieve key strategic objectives. Extensive experience leading high-functioning teams in various situations: traditional public schools, charter schools, public district, county, and state education agencies; private and public sector, state and local government; and, matrix and functional organizational structures. Key qualifications include:

Performance Management Accountability Operations and Financial Management	Strategic Planning Data Management/ Data Governance Policy and Government	Stakeholder Engagement Business Intelligence and Start-up Governance and Board Relations
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EXPERIENCE

Chief Accountability and Performance Officer (Associate Secretary of Education) 2014 – Present
Delaware Department of Education | Dover, DE

Senior cabinet member responsible for executing on a progressive accountability agenda serving over 130,000 students, that drives transparent reporting, performance-driven accountability, and strong program evaluation.

- **Assessment:** Responsible for implementation of Smarter Balanced, NAEP, SAT, and PSAT. Managing the development of annual science and social studies assessments based on computer-adaptive, matrix models. Direct statewide assessment inventory. Track statewide achievement gap and student performance measures.
- **Accountability:** Leading the development and implementation of the state's first accountability system and report card, informed by state priorities, as well as statewide stakeholder feedback. Developing a high school graduate profile, in alignment with statewide accountability, to regularly benchmark student college and career readiness.
- **School Supports and Opportunities:** Lead a statewide school turnaround effort, driving expectations through a new strategic model, and developing a strong Return on Investment evaluation. Primary lead of the USDOE ESEA Flexibility application. Manage graduation and dropout rates, Title I, federal grants, and the state advisory committee.
- **Performance Management:** Lead a statewide performance management platform aligning strategic reform efforts with organizational goals to improve student achievement. Manage \$89M annually in federal education grants for 43 Local Education Agencies. Pioneering national innovations into the performance management of 19 school districts by fusing traditional business intelligence with federal funding efficacy.
- **Data, Research, and Evaluation:** Management of a robust data system that ranked as a 10 out of 10 by the Data Quality Campaign. Drive an agenda focusing on the effective and student-centered use of public dollars.

Assistant Superintendent of Performance Management and Strategic Initiatives 2013 – 2014
Sacramento City Unified School District | Sacramento, CA

Executive Cabinet member of a 45,000+ student public school district responsible for researching, developing, and implementing strategic reform initiatives to improve student achievement and effective resource allocation.

- **Transparent Progress Reporting:** Developed Guide to Success – the first district-wide report card in Sacramento County, providing a series of three distinct prototypes of progress reports and professional development tools.
- **Leadership Development:** Developed, managed and implemented the Principal Development Program, a three-tiered program that was the first formal leadership pipeline in the district.
- **Research and Data Management:** Oversaw Assessment, Research, and Evaluation Department, leading to the district's first IRB approval system, a new student information system, and the district's first program evaluations.
- **CORE:** Coordinated district team on first federal waiver of No Child Left Behind to be given to a non-state group.
- **Accountability:** Managed accountability processes within the district including the review of the School Development and Improvement Plans, School Quality Reviews, and the School Accountability Report Card.
- **Sacramento Pathways:** Lead evaluator for initiative between SCUSD, Sacramento City College, and CSU-Sacramento to ensure college-readiness and sufficient financial and social resources for college completion.

Founder and Executive Director 2009 – Present
Capitol Collegiate Academy | Sacramento, CA

Founding Principal of a K-8 school, with 90%+ students low-income and 90%+ at/above grade level after two years.

- **Instructional Leadership:** Train, support, and lead staff to attaining exceptional student achievement.
- **Human Resources:** Manage staff recruitment, selection, and hiring. Coordinates staff benefits and payroll.
- **Finance, Facilities and Fund Development:** Manage fund development with \$600,000 raised in first two years. Completes all finance and reporting requirements. Secured facility and supervised renovations.
- **Community Outreach and External Partnerships:** Primary contact for media, district, families, and community.

PENNY SCHWINN

Senior Consultant to the Superintendent and Director of Student Achievement

2008 - 2011

St. Hope Public Schools / Sacramento, CA

Advised organization on academic and operational projects including the development of the Strategic Plan.

- Developed a comprehensive teacher support, development, observation, and evaluation system and comprehensive strategic plan to guide the decisions and priorities of the organization, including expansion.
- API increased 83 points in 2008-09 - the biggest state jump for a school over 300 students.

Operations Supervisor

2007 - 2008

McMaster-Carr Supply Company / Santa Fe Springs, CA

Assessed potential improvements and implemented changes to the operational efficiency and productivity for a leading industrial distribution company with over 3,000 employees and annual sales over \$2 billion.

- Developed operational improvement plan, resulting in 20% improvement in response time and 10% in accuracy.
- Managed 3 departments, each with 20+ employees: Operations, Ordering, and Special Projects/Information.

Teacher and Program Director

2004 - 2007

Teach For America / Los Angeles, CA; Baltimore City Public School System: Teach for America / Baltimore, MD

Managed 53 teachers at 23 school sites and recruited and developed an incoming corps of over 225 teachers.

- Created and implemented data-collection systems to dramatically increase efficiency in teacher evaluation and promote teacher independence in self-evaluation and reflection, leading to a 27% increase in efficiency.
- Co-chaired department and taught U.S. History, World History, and Journalism in a large urban high school.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Education

- EdD: University of Southern California (Deans List; Expected Degree: 2016)
- PhD: Claremont Graduate University (Resource Allocation for Student Achievement; Expected Degree: 2016)
- MAT: Johns Hopkins University (June 2006)
- BA: University of California, Berkeley (History; May 2004)

Certifications

- California Administrator Credential
- California Teaching Credential
- Maryland Teacher Accreditation

EXPERIENCE, ACTIVITIES, & AWARDS

- **Fellow, Broad Academy** (2015-present): An advanced development program that identifies and prepares experienced leaders to successfully run urban public education systems.
- **Commissioner for District IV, Sacramento County Parks and Recreation** (2012-14): Appointed as a Commissioner responsible for overseeing the maintenance, governance, and operation of all recreation areas in the County Parks and to provide advisory counsel to the County Board of Supervisors.
- **Trustee, Area V, Sacramento County Board of Education** (2012 – 2013): Elected to Board of Education to represent Trustee Area V, a constituency of over 180,000 people.
 - Academics: Chair of Academics Committee and developed guidelines for curriculum in county classes.
 - Finance: Member of Finance Committee that oversaw the budget development, approval, and auditing process of over \$180,000,000. Supported grant development process to secure \$20 million in funding.
 - Policy: Reviewed state and local laws and regulations for implementation of countywide education policy.
- **Fellow, Building Excellent Schools** (2008 – 2010): Participated in a nationally competitive fellowship committed to improving the achievement of students in our nation's urban centers.

Activities

- Bill and Melinda Gates High Performing School Oversight Committee (2011-2014)
- Sacramento County Children's Coalition (2012-13)
- American Education Research Association
- Phi Delta Kappa: Honors Society (2009-12)
- American Education Finance Association (2009-10)

Awards

- Sacramento School of the Year (2013)
- Walton Foundation Planning Grant (2009-10)
- Dauterive Endowed Scholarship (2008-09)
- Claremont Graduate Scholarship (2007-08)
- Lehmann Award for Teaching Excellence (2006)
- Gilder-Lerhman Fellow, Columbia University (2005)
- Supreme Court Summer Institute (2005)
- Americorps Service Award (2005-06)