

**PORTIA SELENE BONNER, BA, MS, Ph.D.**

12 Eldridge Street, Waterbury, Connecticut 06704 (203) 525-5406 portiaselene@yahoo.com

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April 7, 2011

To the Superintendent Search Committee:

Please accept this letter and attachments as my formal application for the position of Superintendent of Schools for the Osceola County School District. I believe I possess the skills needed to address the goals of the district: setting and supporting high expectations of student outcomes; developing, recruiting and sustaining a faculty and administration that has strong content knowledge and pedagogy; building a sense of community among all stakeholders; and planning and implementing new initiatives that address the achievement gap between underperforming students and the highest performing students.

In this era of *No Child Left Behind* and its pending reexamination, it is essential that public schools graduate well-rounded young adults who are both academically talented, and who are responsible citizens with a strong moral character. While achievement on standardized tests is one important measure of student success, they must also have experiences that prepare them for the realities and challenges of the global economy in which they will live and work. To address this challenge, students will need a curriculum that is culturally responsive and enriched with innovative programs and techniques.

To address the challenges that students will face, a superintendent must be an effective communicator and have the ability to construct a bridge between family and schools. We know from experience that students whose families are actively engaged in the schools in a positive manner will achieve at higher levels. During my three years as Assistant Superintendent of Schools and two years as Superintendent, I have participated in many activities designed to provide clear communication with staff and parents, to improve student achievement, and to engage parents in the education of their children.

Strategic planning is essential to driving change within a district. In my two year tenure serving New Bedford, through focus groups composed of key stakeholders and analyzing data, a three year plan was developed and implemented. As a result of this plan and its implementation, improvement was evident in the areas of student achievement as four of nine schools were removed from the improvement list and the achievement gap between general and special education students was decreased in four of the district's schools.

Additionally, I have played an integral role in the development of an annual school budget for the past five years, collaboratively working with the finance director, assistant superintendent of personnel and the board of education's finance committee. Within the last six years, I was actively engaged in a construction project for a new middle school in Hamden, outfitting the science and technology departments of a new inter-district magnet school in Waterbury and a new state of the art elementary school in New Bedford.

I am cognizant of the unique qualities of the Osceola County School District and the community's needs. I am committed to the well-being of students and fully believe that a Superintendent should be visible and available to the constituents to whom she serves. My effectiveness in every position I have held is evidence of my potential to be your superintendent of schools.

Sincerely,

Portia S. Bonner, Ph.D.

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**CAREER OBJECTIVE:**

To attain the position of Superintendent of Schools and lead a school district utilizing both visionary and proven techniques that requires the use of the full range of my capabilities as an administrator, teacher and researcher.

**ACADEMIC TRAINING:**

2006            **Executive Leadership Program** – *University of Connecticut, Storrs*  
2001            **Doctor of Philosophy, Curriculum & Instruction** - *University of Connecticut, Storrs*  
1990            **Master of Science, Biology** - *Purdue University, West Lafayette*  
1988            **Bachelor of Arts, Biology & Sociology** - *Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs*

**CERTIFICATION & TRAINING:**

Superintendent of Schools, Connecticut & Massachusetts  
Professional Educator for Biology grades 7-12, Connecticut  
Department Chairperson for Biology, Connecticut  
Intermediate Administrator's Certificate, Connecticut  
BEST Support Teacher Training

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

2010-present    **Educational Consultant** – Wolcott Public Schools, Wolcott, Connecticut  
Description: consultant for the science program serving one high school, one middle school and three elementary schools.  
Duties and responsibilities include:

- Assist data teams and analysis of data
- Align curriculum program throughout the grades
- Assist in unit identification and development for integrated approach at the middle school level
- Assist with the continuous development of common formative assessment
- Formalize procedures and protocols for laboratory report, technical writing and note taking
- Collect evidence that department is meeting school and district wide goals
- Conduct walkthroughs
- Executive coaching to assistant superintendent

2008-2010      **Superintendent of Schools** – New Bedford Public Schools, New Bedford, Massachusetts  
Description: educational leader of 22 elementary schools, three middle schools, one comprehensive high school and alternative programs for a student population of 12,650 students.  
Duties and responsibilities included:

- Development of strategic plan
- Improvement of academic rigor for students
- Evaluation of principals and department heads
- Collaboration with leadership team
- Facilitation in the development and management of a fiscally sound budget
- Engagement of parents, businesses, post secondary institutions and community organizations
- Construction of professional learning communities and hiring faculty that exhibits the diversity of the district

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- Restructuring the leadership team
  - Collaboration with State for district improvement
  - Celebration of students
- Spring 2007     **Acting Superintendent of Schools** – Hamden Public Schools, Hamden, Connecticut  
Description: educational leader of eight elementary schools, one middle school, one comprehensive high school and alternative programs for a student population of 7,000 students. Duties and responsibilities included the continuation of district leadership until interim superintendent was appointed.
- 2005-2008     **Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction** – Hamden Public Schools, Hamden, Connecticut  
Description: curriculum and instructional leader of the district. Duties and responsibilities included:  
  - Evaluation and supervision of the performance of academic directors and directors of special programs
  - Analyzation and disaggregation of data pertaining to students' performance and propose district goals to the Superintendent
  - Composition and management of State, Federal and competitive grants
  - Facilitation and development of improvement plans
  - Management of teacher evaluation plans
  - Collaboration with hiring process
- 2003-2005     **Supervisor of Science & Technology Education** - Waterbury Public Schools, Waterbury, Connecticut  
Description: curriculum and instructional leader for the departments of science and technology for grades K-12 in the school district comprised of 22 elementary schools, three middle schools, one comprehensive high school and alternative programs for a student population of 12,650 students. Duties and responsibilities included:  
  - Development of curriculum and programs to improve students academic performance recruitment, recommendation of hirers and evaluation of staff
  - Professional development
  - Budget and management of Perkins grant for technology department
- 1999-2003     **Department Chair** - Science Department, Wilby High School, Waterbury, Connecticut  
Description: curriculum and instructional leader for science department comprised of ten staff members. Duties and responsibilities included:  
  - Scheduling and assignment of classes
  - Managing departmental budget
  - Revision and implementation of curriculum
- 1994-2003     **Instructor** - Biological and General Sciences, Wilby High School, Waterbury, Connecticut
- 1991-1994     **Instructor** - Biological and Physical Sciences, Bullard Havens Regional Vocational Technical School, Bridgeport, Connecticut
- 1990-1994     **Adjunct Faculty** - Biological Sciences, Teikyo Post University, Waterbury, Connecticut

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### **ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

- 2002-2003      **Adjunct Faculty** - Gospel Chorus, Teikyo Post University, Waterbury, Connecticut
- 1991-1992      **Science Instructor** - Physical Science, Summer Sessions for grades 1-5, Naugatuck Valley Continuing Education Program, Naugatuck, Connecticut
- 1990-1992      **Minority Outreach Coordinator and Academic Advisor** - Charter Oak College, Farmington, Connecticut
- 1988-1990      **Teaching Assistant** - Biological Sciences, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
- Summer 1987    **Residential Counselor and Science Tutor** - Higher Education Opportunities Program, Summer Session, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York

### **SUPPLEMENTAL EXPERIENCE:**

- Social Service Coordinator - Mt. Olive Towers, Waterbury, Connecticut.
- Intern - Neighborhood Housing of Waterbury, Inc.
- Church Musician – Mt. Olive AMEZ Church, Waterbury, Connecticut

### **PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED:**

- Guest Speaker for Magnifying the Power of Merchants of Hope, Internet Talk Show on the Voice of America Variety Channel, March 2010
- Guest Speaker for YWCA's week without violence, *Eliminating Racism and Hate Crime*, Breakfast, New Bedford, Massachusetts, October 2009
- Panelist for Harvard Graduate School of Education discussion on *What Works in Leading Districts and Schools*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Spring 2009
- Guest Speaker for City of New Bedford Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration , Massachusetts, January 2009
- Guest Speaker for Ninth Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast, Bristol Community College, Fall River, Massachusetts, January 2009
- Guest Speaker for Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Inc., Good Morning Southcoast Series, Massachusetts, October 2008
- Data Driven Decision Making in the Science Classroom, Waterbury School District, Connecticut, March 2005
- Data Driven Decision Making for Administrators, Waterbury School District, Connecticut, March 2005
- High School Graduation Exit Criteria for Science, Waterbury School District, Connecticut, November 2001

### **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:**

Dissertation: The Influence of Secondary Science Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge, Educational Beliefs, and Perceptions of the Curriculum on Implementation and Science Reform, 2001

Undergraduate Thesis in Biology: Effects of Circadian Rhythms Disruption on OH Consumption in Mice, 1988

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Undergraduate Thesis in Sociology: The Work Ethic and Professionalization of the Genetic Counselor. Paper presented at National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Meeting, New Orleans, 1988

### **HONORS & AWARDS:**

- 2003 Professional Award - National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., the Waterbury Chapter
- 2001 Fellow - Education Policy Fellowship Program for the State of Connecticut
- 1998 Science Teacher Award - Olin Corporation
- 1997 Grant Recipient - Ed-Tech Center training on utilizing computer technology as instructional tools in the classroom
- 1995 Apprenticeship - Using Biotechnology in the Classroom, University of Connecticut
- 1994 Fellow - Research concerning the effects of exercise on the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle, University of Connecticut Health Center.

### **AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:**

Pi Lambda Theta  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
National Science Teachers Association  
National Association of School Boards  
American Association of School Administrators  
National Alliance of Black School Educators  
Advisory Council member of New Bedford Symphony Orchestra  
Former member of the Charlton College of Business Advisory Board, University of Massachusetts  
Former member of the Collaborative Alliance Network Board, Brown University

## REFERENCES

### PORTIA SELENE BONNER

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#### **Additional References**

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