

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Superintendent available in the School district of Osceola County.

Research-based and data driven decision making has helped me guide and support my administrative team and staff in aligning the curriculum to College Readiness Standards and increasing the achievement of every student at Lincoln Park High School. As Deputy Chief Instructional Office in Area 54, Chicago Public Schools, I have had the opportunity to share my vision and my tactical plan for implementing standard-based instruction in over 100 other CPS high schools and elementary schools. I am ready to work more intensively with schools in Osceola County to implement this plan that has been effective in raising student achievement across diverse groups of both high-achieving and struggling students of diverse racial and socio-economic backgrounds. I oversee the curriculum and instructional programs of approximately 100,000 students within the 115 schools of Area 54; I support the vision and mission of each school and provide support for the principals and their administrative teams.

During my tenure as principal of Lincoln Park High School, the school was named a “Gold Medal School” in the *U.S News and World Report*. We were ranked in the top 100 schools in America. We were also ranked #1 and #2 in Illinois from 2005- 2010 by Newsweek. We also took both 1st and 2nd place in the Intel Competition for Math and Science programs, making us the number one Math and Science program in the country.

In addition to the outstanding academic achievement under my leadership, I was able to balance a Budget, of approximately 18,000,000.00; hire strong well-qualified staff, create an exceptional School Improvement Plan; and develop and implement an Emergency Plan that set a tone for continuous improvement in a safe school culture.

Based on my success with Lincoln Park High School, I was selected to take charge of 115 high schools and elementary schools in Area 54, the largest area in CPS. I provide leadership in the design and implementation of curricula that support teaching and learning, that builds leadership capacity in all administrators, and assists principals in monitoring school goals. In addition, I support our academic programs for ELL and students with special needs. Presently, we are training our educators to adopt the common core standards and begin to align the curriculum to those standards.

As a district administrator, I also work with administrative teams to continually assess and monitor the implementation of district priorities such as RTI and data-driven instruction in each high school. I continually monitor and evaluate growth for all subgroups; provide leadership in the implementation of all professional development activities in the schools; conduct school audits, participate in principal evaluation, and assist in the resolution of legal issues that arise in schools. I act as the liaison for teacher and parent grievance issues, monitor expulsions and suspensions. Above all, I help guide, support and develop our principals to become strong instructional leaders that support student achievement by facilitating professional collaboration with their faculties.

My presentations at conferences such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals as well as for my own district have enabled me to reflect on how my success in raising student achievement in Chicago can be replicated and brought to scale. As my resume indicates, my administrative accomplishments and successes over the last 10 years have given me the expertise I need to advance any school district to the next level.

I am committed to the continuous improvement and excellence of this district; I would be honored if you would consider my application. I will work loyally and diligently to support our community's initiative to provide a world class education to each and every student. I have a proven track record of leading with the highest levels of respect and integrity for diversity, educators, parents and all stakeholders within the district.

I look forward to sharing my expertise with Osceola County School Board.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Bessie Karvelas

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SUMMARY

Experienced educational leader with successful experience in raising the student achievement of economically disadvantaged students and high performing students. Outstanding strengths include:

- Instructional leadership
- Raising achievement and closing achievement gaps
- Financial and program management of federal and state grants
- Management and balancing of school-wide and district-wide, multi-million dollar budget
- Communication skills
- Strong interpersonal and collaboration skills
- Facilitation of district-wide university, business and community partnerships
- Development of International Educational Exchange Programs for students and teachers.

EDUCATION

Fellow, Illinois Superintendent Preparation Academy, 2010

Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership, Nova-Southeastern University, 2003

Dissertation Topic: Improving Reading Scores in a Low-Socio Economic Environment

Master of Education, Educational Administration, Lewis University, 2000

Bachelor of Education, /English, University of Illinois Chicago, 1975

Concordia University/ Adjunct Professor 2009-present

Presenter for Illinois Administrators Association (2011) Present

Taught IAA classes for administrators who need to fulfill their state accreditation requirement for certification.

Internship Supervisor for Aspiring Principals in Graduate level programs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

District 299

**Acting Deputy Chief Instructional Officer
Chicago, Illinois**

2010-Present

Responsible for management of the teaching and learning and instructional leadership operations in this diverse district of 409,300 students. Student population is 41% Hispanic, 9% White, 45% African American, and 4% Asian, with 86% economically disadvantaged and 12% English Language Learners. Manage a division of 116 schools with 28 direct reports. Serve on the CEO's cabinet, involved in planning, budget, audits and other management issues providing overall direction and leadership to the area district. Track record for improving reading scores in all subgroups.

- Developed area-wide post-secondary strategic action plan. Results are pending. Our goal to increase college readiness in 87% of all students taking the ACT or SAT with 60% scoring as college-ready.
- Narrowed achievement gaps among student subgroups by as many as 50 percentage points in science, math, language arts and social studies on the state assessment since 2003
- Narrowed the achievement gaps among student subgroups in reading by as many as 13 percentage points on the ACT for a population of 2300 students; 33% white, 33% African-American, 33% other (Hispanic, Asian)
- Assisted in the design process for 2 new high school campuses as part of the REN 10 project
- Implemented a \$110,000 technology integration project for classroom devices resulting in district-wide implementation of project and problem based learning
- Created and implemented a curriculum and assessment management system, providing real time curriculum, instruction and assessment to teachers
- Developed a school-wide partnership with DePaul University to create a college and career program serving the area
- Developed and implemented district area reading and writing initiative
- Member of two district task force groups working on school leadership, instructional and non-instructional issues embedded in the Principal Preparation Program for District

Provide leadership to schools, serving approx. 11,500 students in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grades. Responsible for the instructional leadership, strategic planning, human resource management, community relations, financial management and student management of this area and internal school audits.

- Instituted a new writing program based on the Hersey model
- Implemented the area Curriculum Alignment team, overseeing the systemic alignment of content in grades PK-12
- Developed a system-wide approach to PK-12 reading and writing initiative
- Implemented a district-wide RTI training and adopted NWEA data program for all elementary and high schools in area

- Provide leadership and support to 10 high schools and 20 elementary schools
- Oversee Curriculum and instruction
- Provide support to schools for Organizational processes and procedures
- Serve a support for planning , communications, operational plans
- Monitor, assess and evaluate data
- Liaison and support for educational laws and regulations, crisis planning, security issues,
- Maintain school district's policies and procedures.
- Support the mission and vision that is shared and created by each school community
- Help develop and implement procedures for educational programs, policies and plans that are linked to learning goals and incorporate them into the district's educational mission and vision for schools that are academically challenged and have not made AYP
- Problem-solve, manage, facilitate and support schools through decision making process that will improve the school district and the daily operations of the schools.
- Facilitate the use of data analysis and data collection in decision making and problem solving,
- Support principals in creating a climate that promotes academic rigor, and ensures a safe climate conducive to learning and teaching
- Provide support for all principals regarding daily operational functions
- Provide support for various techniques and professional development associated with instructional methods and practices
- Facilitate and engage in activities that result in systemic assessments for individual academic growth and performance and report that performance to our district and community.
- Collaborate with family and community members regarding needs, and issues that developed in their school community.
- Support and identify components of special education strategies for promoting successful learning experiences for students with exceptionalities
- Supervise, mentor and coach principals
- Build leadership capacity in all administrators
- Focus on collaboration with all stakeholder groups
- Focus on building a common understanding of union contracts within our school district
- Assume all responsibilities for instructional support and staff development
- Conduct School Audits

- Participate in principal evaluation process
- Interview principals for leadership positions
- Assist principals in setting and monitoring school goals to improve student achievement

Chicago, IL

Responsible for management of this school serving 2300 students, 51% of whom were economically disadvantaged, 30% Hispanic, 33% African American, 33% White and 3% Asian

- Increased passing rate in reading, math and science on the state assessment, had the highest number of AP exams with the passing rate of 3 or more, resulting in nation-wide exemplary performance, and named "Gold Medal School" ranked in the top 100 schools in the country by Newsweek and U.S. World and News Report 2008
- Rank #1 and #2 in Illinois by Newsweek 2005-2010
- Recipient of the INTEL Award for Improvement in science and math
- Served on the district level advisory committee, advising the Superintendent on critical campus and district issues
- Recognized by College Board for having the student in the country with the highest gains from Explore to ACT (14 to 34)
- First Place Recipient of the International Science Fair competition from 2005 to 2009
- International Baccalaureate Program ranked in the top 10% in the world
- University of Chicago Consortium's study of 2008 -School's IB programmed out performed all selective enrollment schools with an average score of 32
- Highest number of National Merit Semi-Finalist in Chicago 2005-2009
- Awarded the Intel Science and Math Award 2009
- Implemented Safety Program and awarded \$75,000 in surveillance system for school via Community Grant
- Received Technology Grant \$200,000.00 to upgrade infra structure of school based on Technology Plan
- Received Gates Millennium Science Grant \$700,000.00 to update all Science Labs in the school.

Principal- Von Humboldt School District 299

2000 – 2004

Chicago, IL

Provided leadership for an elementary school with 99% of its students economically disadvantaged; Responsible for instructional leadership, budget management, human resource management, and community relations.

- Increased passing rate in reading and math combined on the state assessment by as much as 50 %, resulting in school-wide recognized performance, one of the top ratings a school can achieve in the district's accountability system-ranked school as "Rising Stars" Awarded \$5,000.00
- Facilitated partnerships with Northeastern University, University of Illinois Chicago and the Union League Club- Chicago Girls and Boys Club to create an after school curriculum and staff development model
- Provided after school ELL classes for parents
- Provided GED classes for parents and community
- Developed school-wide reading and writing initiative

- Created a new systemic walk-through for teacher collaboration and accountability

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

- Featured in National Association of Secondary Principals as "Breaking Ranks" school and principal 2005- 2006
- Honored by the Chicago City Council and Mayor Daley for exemplary leadership and performance to the city of Chicago and the Chicago Public Schools-- May 2010
- Recognized in *Sun-Times/Stella's Column* May 2010 for high performance academically and community based initiatives developed at Lincoln Park High School
- Who's Who in Leaders 2007, 2008, 2009
- Phi Delta Kappa Leadership Award for Outstanding Leadership in Chicago 2005
- Teacher of the year Award -1984

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Association of Supervisors in Curriculum Development
- National Staff Development Council
- Phi Delta Kappa
- Association for Supervisors in Curriculum Development
- Illinois American Federation of Teachers and Administrators
- National Association of Secondary Principals
- National Association of Teachers of English

PRESENTATIONS

International Level

- "*Reflective Practice of School Administrators and Teachers*" Belgrade, Serbia
Birmingham, England

National Level

- "*Longitudinal Data*" co-presenter, NASSP Conference 2008
San Diego, California
- "*Data Driven Decision Making Approach to Teaching and Learning,*" 2007, 2008 NASSP San Antonio, Texas
- "*Transition from Middle School to High School*" National Panel of Leaders 2006
Washington D.C.
- "*Breaks Ranks Leader*" presenter NASSP California 2005
- Invited Panelist for NASSP "*Breaking Ranks*" Conference Washington D.C.

District Level

- *"Closing the Achievement Gap"* Presenter, Chicago, 2007
- *"High School Demonstration Project"*- presenter for High School District 299 Conference- Orland Park Illinois
- *"Raising the Bar"* High School Mini Conference Chicago, 2005
- *"Light the Lamps of Learning"* presenter for Principals High School Retreat 2010
- *"RTI and Differentiation"* co-presenter for elementary and high school principals
- *"Data Rich Climate"* Co- presenter with ACT College Board
- *"Using College Readiness Standards to Drive Instruction"* presenter for five high school principals and teachers (approx. 300 people)

References Available Upon Request