

Dr. Melissa L. Whitfield

Superintendent of Schools

Chatham, NJ

Educational Leader with a proven track record of raising student achievement and improving systems in the most challenged learning environments.

- Superintendent of Schools for Berkeley Heights Public Schools (2500 students), who has served as a teacher, principal, and principal leader.
- Responsible for over 500 staff members
- The leader of the Administrative Council involved in all major decisions involving academics, finance, operations, human capital, community and government relations.
- Proven experience in increasing academic achievement.
- Created Strategic Plan that focused on inclusion within our district.
- Strong fiscal leader with experience supporting the implementation of a \$62M District budget.
- Proven communicator with The Board, parents, staff, and students.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

2001 The University of Georgia <i>Ph.D. Educational Leadership</i>	Athens, GA
1998 The University of South Carolina <i>Post Graduate Study Educational Leadership</i>	Columbia, SC
1992 Valdosta State University <i>M.S. Ed., Reading Education/Middle childhood education</i>	Valdosta, GA
1992 Valdosta State University <i>M.S. Ed., Early Childhood Education</i>	Valdosta, GA
1991 Valdosta State University <i>B.S. Ed., Early Childhood Education</i>	Valdosta, GA

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

BERKELEY HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

July 2019 – Current

BHPS serves 2500 students (67.2% White/Caucasian, 11.8% Hispanic/Latino, 1.7% Black, 14.4% Asian/Pacific Islander; 14.7% Exceptional Student Education/Special Education, and 1% English Language Learners); 6 public schools, 375+ employees.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Strategic Leadership of all schools, principal leaders, the offices of special education, culture and climate, guidance and counseling, fine and performing arts, athletics, police, school improvement, leadership development, equity,

inclusion, Title IX, after school programming and mentoring. Received community partner of the year award by the Summit and Berkeley Heights YMCA.

Educational Outcomes

- Realigned district to create equity and provide room for Full Day Kindergarten. Overhauled the entire K 5 Elementary Instructional Model, including transitioning to a standards based curriculum for students (curriculum had not been updated in over 12 years), implemented aligned curriculum and literacy skills intervention program, reimaged the principal role to serve as an instructional leader:
 - Created Multi Tiered Systems of Supports for K 8 to reduce 504 and I&RS referrals
 - Redesigned Gifted and Talented Program to bring in project based activities
 - Created before and after school program to help with Covid loss impacting over 200 students
 - Worked with Special Education Director to implement the Collaborative Consultative Model in support of students and staff.
 - Created 5 year Strategic Plan that focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion positively impacting HIB filings
 - Created Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force cross section of stakeholders
 - Created Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committees across all schools

Human Capital

- Created and Led the District's Teacher Leadership Cohort, developing a pipeline for teacher leaders and increasing retention of the most effective staff.
- Led & developed succession planning frameworks to identify and develop future school leaders.
- Recruited, hired and placed 2 building principals
- Improved equity in staffing by partnering with diverse recruiting outreach, increased the number of diverse educators

System Leadership

- Partnered with the board to redesign all of the district's policies
- Assisted in the realignment of the District's safety team responses to reduce student anxiety
- Redesigned student grading to bring equity and consistency to the process
- Created Anti Bias training for all staff members in alignment with DEI initiatives
- Presented at the National Association for School Superintendents Conference on Equity

COVID-19 Leadership

- Led effort to be one of the first districts to open for in person learning in NJ.
- Created the protocol manual and implemented health and safety standards for schools.
- Trained principals on COVID safety protocols, family engagement, student and staff wellness.
- Created training and development to do a quick turnaround moving to remote learning in less than 24 hours, reducing learning loss
- Led Townhalls on Remote instruction for over 500 parents and community members

- Created principal implementation checklist for organizational management for re entry from COVID.
- Organized 13 Family and Technology sites for parent assistance with food, technology and academic support.

FLORHAM PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

2015-2019

Florham Park School District is a Pre K 8 District with over 1100 students.

SUPERINTENDENT

Lead a school district of 1100 students and 300 employees. Implemented a 1:1 Google Chromebook initiative, started a comprehensive professional development plan for all employees, conducted an in depth evaluation of the Special Education Department, and focused on a true Balanced Literacy approach. Created a teacher leadership cohort which focuses on a growth mindset for teachers. Redesigned Math curriculum, ESY curriculum, and partnered with Teacher's College of Columbia to grow instruction. Achieved Future Ready Status for the State of New Jersey.

- Improved PARCC Scores Over a three year period, ELA scores improved over 20% and Math 10%.
- Reduced BSI Population Reduced BSI population by 27% in a three year time period.
- Only superintendent in New Jersey to be selected for the AASA Early Learning Cohort.
- Asked to give podcast by Frontline on the significant change in culture and academic achievement in my short time in Florham Park

SPARTA TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2012-2015

Acting Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent/Special Education Director

- Development of STEM Academy-Created STEM academy for 8 12th grade students. Designed application process. Students graduate with 8 AP courses at the end of the program.
- Created Professional Development Academy-Designed courses that surrounding districts would send their teachers to, creating cash flow.
- Designed Summer Academy-Ensuring students were completing rigorous work during the summer, I designed our own "for profit" summer academy.
- Increased high school ranking by 10 points
- Increased number of AP students achieving 3 or higher by 32%

Implementation of the Common Core. Changed reading program to Readers'/Writers' workshop, initiated grant for funding of the Next Generation Science Standards. Prepared district for PARCC. Created Brain Camp for at risk K and 1st grade students. Created design for Full Day Kindergarten and completed implementation.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Curriculum Director, Carlstadt-East Rutherford, NJ (2009-2013)

Redesigned curriculum for three districts and passed NJQSAC

Curriculum Director/Assistant Principal/Acting Principal, Kell High School, Marietta, GA (2001-2009)

Employed to help design all aspects of a new school. Together with the principal the curriculum was researched and designed, school schedule was proposed, and school mascot chosen. Once the school opened, my position was to evaluate over 100 teachers, organize bus schedules, supervise extracurricular activities, discipline juniors and seniors, schedule AP testing, and monitor noncertified staff. Piloted a new scheduling system for the entire school system of Cobb County. Designed and monitored meetings regarding the implementation of NCLB. School housed over 3,000 students

Teacher 7th grade 1995 1998

UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTION

- 2007 Present Johns Hopkins University Columbia, MD
 - o *Curriculum Redesign/Instructor*

- 2004 Present The University of Phoenix Phoenix, AZ
 - o *Instructor*

- 1998 2001 The University of Georgia Athens, GA
 - o *Graduate Assistant*

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- American Association of School Superintendents 2012 Present
- New Jersey Association of School Superintendents 2012 Present
- Board Member, Morris Union Jointure Commission 2013 Present
- Association of Supervision and Curriculum Design 2009 Present
- Garden State Coalition of Schools 2020 Present