



# Kathleen Howe

*Dossier*

**Presented by:**

**Atlantic Research Partners**

***CANDIDATE***  
***COVER LETTER***

April 27, 2017

Board Members  
Clarksville-Montgomery County School System  
621 Gracey Avenue  
Clarksville, TN 37040

Dear Board Members:

I am an accomplished educational leader who welcomes the opportunity to serve the stakeholders of the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) as Director of Schools. I believe I am uniquely qualified to lead CMCSS to the next level during this time of continued community growth and maintain its reputation of academic and system excellence. My combination of 1) strong interpersonal and managerial skills, 2) ability to lead and encourage innovation, and 3) commitment to open communication with all stakeholders makes me a strong candidate.

I have a record of success working with the board, staff, students, parents, community and business partners in the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) where I recently served as the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Director of the DeKalb Online Academy. In addition, my current work as an educational consultant and Adjunct Professor at Rockhurst University supporting undergraduate and graduate students completing their student teaching requirements keeps me grounded in the core business of every district – teaching and learning.

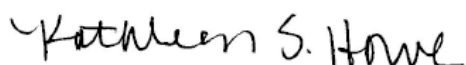
I am passionate about providing all students, regardless of their background, a quality education with competitive advantages that prepares them to realize their full potential and contribute to a global society. My life's work has been dedicated to educating and leading with passion. The key strengths that I possess for success as Director of the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System include:

- Listening, effectively communicating and relationship-building with diverse stakeholders;
- Developing, guiding, and supporting a wide range of initiatives in collaboration with district and community partners;
- Making data-driven decisions to drive academic excellence; and
- Leading and managing personnel to achieve educational and financial targets.

Please see my resume for additional core qualifications as well as detailed information about my professional and academic experiences and accomplishments.

I can be reached via email at xxxxxxxxxx.com or on my mobile phone, xxx-xxx-xxxx. I appreciate your full consideration and look forward to the opportunity for an interview. I am confident that I am a highly-qualified candidate who will value-add to the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen S. Howe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen S. Howe, Ph.D.

***CANDIDATE***  
***RESUME***

# **Kathleen S. Howe, Ph.D.**

## **SUMMARY:**

*Accomplished education leader with experience establishing and meeting strategic goals and objectives. Successful in multiple roles at the classroom, building, district, university and state level working with diverse stakeholders. Results-driven with excellent communication and relationship skills.*

## **CORE COMPETENCIES**

### *Leadership & Management*

- Developing, leading and implementing strategic and operational plans to drive organizational change and academic achievement
- Preparing and managing \$100+ million combined division budgets
- Leading and managing a division comprised of 200+ central office staff and 500+ building-level instructional support staff
- Leading multiple whole-school and district-wide initiatives within fast-paced and changing environments, while meeting key benchmarks and timelines

### *Curriculum & Instruction*

- Leading the design, development and delivery of professional learning programs to 6,000+ certified staff in more than 138 school locations, including training, implementing and monitoring a new statewide teacher and leader evaluation system
- Directing district-wide development, training, and implementation of a Common Core aligned curriculum, universal screener, 800+ pre/post grade-level assessments of student learning objectives (SLO), and quarterly benchmark assessments
- Leading selection and utilization of multiple software programs, digital content, resources and online tools that align with course curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Planning, delivering, assessing, and revising a variety of courses for students ranging in age and ability within K-12 and post-secondary settings using both online and face-to-face formats
- Designing and delivering curriculum and instruction audits and program improvement services

### *Communication & Organization*

- Strong verbal communication and interpersonal skills coupled with experience designing and delivering 100+ professional presentations
- Skilled writer and author of professional publications
- Experience interacting with diverse stakeholder groups to listen, learn, problem-solve, and consensus-build
- Ability to coordinate and simultaneously manage multiple projects in a fast-paced and rapidly changing environment
- Proficient computer skills with learning management systems, course software development programs, student information systems, Microsoft Office, and more

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

---

### **2004-Present**

#### **Adjunct Faculty**

Rockhurst University, Kansas City, MO: University Enrollment 2,077

Graceland University, Independence, MO: University Enrollment 2,500

Currently serving as the faculty liaison between cooperating teachers and Rockhurst University graduate and undergraduate student teachers assigned to a variety of urban and suburban public school districts throughout the Kansas City Metro. Roles and responsibilities include:

- Observing student teachers in the classroom and provide written feedback and coaching about the curriculum, instruction, planning, classroom management, and evaluation
- Providing guidance and feedback in all areas of student teaching requirements, including selection of portfolio components, defense artifacts, and Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment (MoPTA) tasks
- Meeting with cooperating teachers to monitor the overall progress of the student teachers
- Conducting all formative and summative assessments as required as part of the Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES)
- Collaborating with appropriate university faculty and staff on other student teaching program and degree requirements, meetings, and activities

During 2004-2009, I developed and taught undergraduate courses in education at Rockhurst University and Graceland University. Courses included:

- Diagnosis and treatment of reading difficulties
- Elementary reading
- Content Literacy

### **2009-Present**

#### **Educational Consultant**

Provide a wide range of academic advisory, professional development, and consulting services.

- Literacy standards and assessment advisory consulting services to a state department of education
- Curriculum and instruction audit and planning services
- Academic leadership advisory services
- Development of a national literacy coaching professional development training for an educational publisher
- Development of a professional development plan for a school in targeted improvement
- Education technology and online learning consulting

Clients range from state departments of education, to urban and rural school districts, an educational publisher, and internet start-up.

**2011-2016**

**Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction  
Director, DeKalb Online Academy (DOLA)**

DeKalb County School District, Stone Mountain, GA: Enrollment 102,003, with 71.13% free and reduced lunch, 12% English Learners, 9% Special Needs, 88% non-white, and refugee and immigrant students from 160 countries speaking over 142 languages. The district has 138 schools, including 10 Start-up Charter Schools and 5 Conversion Charter Schools.

**Highlights:**

- Led a division comprised of ten departments and 200+ staff within the country's 26<sup>th</sup> largest public school district as a deputy superintendent
- Prepared, managed, and met educational and financial targets for \$100+ million combined budgets
- Led the design, development and delivery of professional learning programs to 6,000+ certified staff in more than 138 school locations, including training, implementing and monitoring a new statewide teacher and leader evaluation system
- Led multiple strategic initiatives and projects within a fast-paced environment, including district-wide development, training, and implementation of a Common Core aligned curriculum an online benchmark test development partnership with an educational publisher for use with 100,000 students
- Collaborated with Facilities/Operations and Instructional Technology Divisions on 5 year \$500 million dollar capital improvements budget to enhance teaching and learning infrastructure and equipment throughout the district
- Oversaw compliance with approved waiver to NCLB and the associated College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), including district and school-based trainings associated with CCRPI accountability standards
- Managed all aspects of three virtual programs for a district's online academy serving over 3,000 students

**Accomplishments:**

- Increased District score by 103 points on the 2015 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
- Sixteen of District's 23 high schools placed on State School Superintendent's 2015 honor roll for Advanced Placement (AP) tests, based on 2014 AP courses and exams
- Improved District high school graduation rate by 13.7 percentage points from 57.2 percent in 2012 to 70.9 percent in 2015
- Improved performance on five of seven 2013-14 SY End of Course Tests (EOCT) for grades 9-12
- Demonstrated District performance gains equal to students statewide and showed year-to-year aggregated performance improvement in four of five subject areas (reading, English Language Arts, science, social studies, and mathematics) on the 2013-14 Criterion Reference Competency Tests (CRCT) for grades 3-8
- Demonstrated Career and Technical Education (CTE) program improvements across 4 years, including increased graduation rate for CTE concentrators (83.4% to 88.6%), CTE pathway completers (2,793 to 3,155), 53 industry certified programs across 9 different areas, 12,221 students participating in a range of Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), and 809 students enrolled in work-based learning (WBL) across 21 high schools

- Implemented district-wide STEM initiative resulting in 4 state certified STEM schools, 8 AdvancED STEM Certified schools, 100 school within 3 cohorts and 120+ student robotics teams participating in a range of STEM activities, competitions and events
- Relocated and expanded DeKalb International Welcome Center (DIWC) and recentralized translation and interpretation services to better serve District's 18,000+ students and parents whose Primary Home Language is Other Than English (PHLOTE) representing 140+ languages from 160+ countries
- Managed \$34+ million dollar Race to the Top Grant and related initiatives
- Eliminated \$20+ million dollar budget deficit accomplished in part to central office downsizing, reorganization and enhanced management of department and division budgets
- Regained District accreditation status with AdvancED and receipt of full accreditation status for all 23 high schools with Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC)

**2006-2009**

**Interim Associate Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction  
Director, Professional Development  
Director, Communication Arts  
Coordinator, Communication Arts**

Kansas City, Missouri Public School District, Kansas City, MO: Enrollment 30,000 and 80% free and reduced lunch

Led multiple, district-level, academic teams in a district of 60 schools, 2,500+ teachers, and 30,000 students. Key responsibilities included:

- Directing curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment
- Managing 60+ building coaches and staff of district coordinators.
- Managing multiple grants and budgets (including \$4.8 million Early Reading First grant)
- Managing development and execution of the curriculum, instruction, and professional development components of the district's state mandated improvement plan.
- Partnering with a local university through a federal Title II program to train 30 paraprofessionals to become certified, full-time teachers over two years.
- Serving as the district literacy liaison to state and regional education agencies.

During my tenure, an intervention program that I managed delivered 1.8 - 2.0 years of reading gain in a single school year to participating students. Additionally, during my tenure, the district grade 10 Communication Arts (reading and writing) scores on the Missouri state test increased until approximately 50% of students in 2008-2009 scored at or above the proficient level.

**2004-2006**

**District Literacy Coach (6-12)**

Kansas City, Missouri Public School District, Kansas City, MO: Enrollment 30,000 and 80% free and reduced lunch



Provided literacy coaching and curriculum, instruction, and assessment support to 22 building coaches and 70+ teachers across 22 middle and high schools in the district.

- Designed and delivered literacy improvement professional development programs
- Provided in-classroom coaching to reading specialists

#### **2002-2004                      District Lead Literacy Coach (9-12)**

Kansas City, Kansas Public School District, Kansas City, KS: Enrollment 20,000 and 80% free and reduced price lunch

Provided district-level and site-based professional development and teacher coaching.

- Provided professional development to teachers in reading and writing.
- Developed district literacy curriculum and aligned it to state standards.
- Provided a full range of teacher coaching services from goal setting to observing, modeling and debriefing.
- Led preparation for state and district assessments.
- Analyzed all state and district literacy data to plan new professional development programs.

#### **2001-2002                      Kansas State Reading Consultant**

Kansas State Department of Education, Topeka, KS: 305 districts, 511,000 students, and 36% free and reduced lunch

Provided leadership for all state reading program initiatives.

- Planned state reading programming, including standards and assessments.
- Provided policy advisory services to districts.
- Led workshops, state committees, and conferences on the development and implementation of state reading standards and assessments.
- Served as liaison to other education service agencies, advocacy and professional organizations, and institutions of higher education in Kansas.

#### **2000-2001                      Reading Specialist**

Shawnee Mission North High School, Overland Park, KS: Enrollment 1,700 and 16% free and reduced lunch

Served as high school reading specialist.

- Conducted assessments to determine students' reading needs.
- Developed individual reading plans. Instructed students individually and in groups to enhance their literacy skills.
- Worked with building committee to develop and coordinate school-wide literacy program as part of school improvement plan.
- Provided professional development on literacy across the curriculum to colleagues.

## **1994-2000      Reading & English Teacher**

Blue Valley Northwest High School, Overland Park, KS: Enrollment 1,707 and 7% free and reduced lunch. Harmony Middle School, Overland Park, KS: Enrollment 557 and 10% free and reduced lunch.

Served as middle school and high school reading and English teacher.

- Courses included, but not limited to, Communication Arts, English Literature & Composition I-IV, Contemporary Communications, English 9, 10, 11, 12, American Literature, and Reading Lab
- Sponsored publication of school literary magazine.
- Supervised Student Writing Center.
- Provided building and district-level professional development to colleagues and parents related to Six Traits Writing, state assessment preparation, and content literacy strategies.
- Served on district curriculum committees to plan courses that used new methods and materials.
- Served on district assessment committees to score state and local assessments.

## **1990-1994      Wheat Futures & Options Trading Floor Clerk**

The Louis Dreyfus Corporation (LDC), Kansas City Board of Trade (KCBOT), Kansas City, Missouri: An international company involved in a variety of areas including, but not limited to, agriculture, metal, oil, energy, commodities and international shipping. The company is among the world's largest leader in cotton, rice, and sugar trade. Maintained an office within the KCBOT for purposes of hard red winter wheat futures and options trading. Hard red winter wheat is the principal ingredient of bread.

Served as trading floor clerk.

- Managed all aspects of the trading floor desk for wheat futures and options as well as back office business after trading hours at the KCBOT location.
- Placed phone and written orders as well as flashed orders to LDC traders and various brokers in the trading pit.
- Checked trades.
- Reconciled account positions following the close of each day's trading.

## EDUCATION

---

**University of Kansas**

**Lawrence, Kansas, 2012**

**Ph.D. Curriculum & Teaching**

Major Reading Education, Minor Special Education

Dissertation: *The Impact of Collaborative Literacy Coaching on Middle and High School Teachers' Personal and General Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Teaching*

Committee: Dr. Arlene Barry (Chair), Dr. Don Deshler, Dr. Karen Jorgensen, Dr. Donita Massengill-Shaw, Dr. Diane Nielsen

**University of Georgia**

**Athens, Georgia, 2014**

**Ed.S. Educational Administration & Policy**

**Middlebury College**

**Middlebury, Vermont &**

**Oxford University, Lincoln College**

**Oxford, England, 2000**

Bread Loaf School of English

**M.A. English**

**University of Missouri-Kansas City**

**Kansas City, Missouri, 2000**

**M.A. Reading Education**

**Ottawa University**

**Ottawa, Kansas, 1995**

**Secondary English Teaching Certificate**

**University of Kansas**

**Lawrence, Kansas, 1990**

**B.A. English**

## PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

---

PRL, Educational Leadership System-Level (P-12) [FLD707], Georgia, 2014-2019

PRL, Educational Leadership Building-Level (P-12) [FLD706], Georgia, 2014-2019

SRT, English (6-12) [FLD730], Georgia, 2014-2019

SRT, Middle Grades (4-8) Language Arts [FLD853], Georgia, 2014-2019

SRT, Reading (P-12) [FLD732], Georgia, 2014-2019

C, Clearance Certificate [FLD694], Georgia, 2014-2019

Initial Admin, Superintendent (K-12), Missouri, 2015-2019

Initial Admin, Principal (K-8), Missouri, 2015-2019

Initial Admin, Principal (7-12), Missouri, 2015-2019

Special Reading (K-12), Language Arts (5-9), English (9-12), Missouri, 2004-2103

Reading Specialist (K-12), English (7-12), Kansas, 2003-2008

## RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

---

### Educational Research

- **Dissertation research:** *The Impact of Collaborative Literacy Coaching on Middle and High School Teachers' Personal and General Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Teaching.*
- **Research participant** in various pilot studies conducted in collaboration with the University of Kansas' Center on Research for Learning (CRL) and the Kansas City, Kansas Public School District and between CRL and the Kansas City, Missouri Public School District, Spring and Summer 2004 and Fall and Spring of 2004-2005 school year.
- **Research assistant,** Reviewed assessment passages during the development of a national comprehension assessment funded by a grant provided by the Carnegie Foundation to the Center on Research for Learning (CRL), Summer 2005

### Awards & Honors

- **Nominated,** Kauffman Foundation's Kansas City Connector Project, recognizing individuals and organizations doing great work improving education and supporting entrepreneurs and progress in the Kansas City area, February 2017.
- **Board Member,** School Leaders for Excellence in Education (SLEE), 2015.
- **Panel Member,** Education Research & Development Institute (ERDI), 2014-2015.
- **Cohort Member,** SUPES Academy (National leadership development program), 2014-2015.
- **Moderator,** Dunwoody, GA City Council Candidates Debate, Sponsored by Young Families of Dunwoody, October 2014.
- **Invited Speaker,** DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce Executive Speaker Series, June 2014.
- **Recipient of International Reading Association's Five Star Policy Recognition Award** on behalf of the Kansas State Department of Education and Kansas Reading Association. 2003. Award based on two-year application/portfolio completion process initiated and led by me during 2001-2003.

### State Education Advisory Work

- **Committee Member,** Missouri Advanced Placement Advisory Committee, June 2008-2009.
- **Committee Member,** Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
  - English II End-of-Course Exam Achievement Level Descriptors, Fall 2008
  - English I End-of-Course Exam Achievement Level Descriptors, Fall 2009
  - Statewide Adolescent Literacy Plan, May 2008-2009
- **North Central Accreditation (NCA) Reading Chair** for 4 school districts in Kansas.
  - Blue Valley West High School, 2003-2007

- Shawnee North High School, 2003-2007
- Lawrence Free State High School, Co-Chair, 2004-2008
- Highland Park High School, Co-Chair, 2005-2008
- **Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle Accreditation Review Team Member** for 3 districts in Missouri.
  - Grandview C-4 Schools, 2008-2009
  - Hickman Mills C-1 Schools, 2008-2009
  - St. Louis Public Schools, 2008-2009

## PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

---

- Howe, K. S. (2015). A message from Dr. Kathleen S. Howe. *SLEE Weekly*, 1 (September), 1.
- Howe, K. S., & Barry, A. L. (2014). Change in teacher efficacy as a result of collaborative literacy coaching. *Journal of Educational Research and Innovation*, 3(1), 1-23.
- Howe, K. S. (2014). 10 reasons supporting common core. *Voices Magazine*, 9(2), 24.
- Howe, K. S. (2012). *The Impact of Collaborative Literacy Coaching on Middle and High School Teachers' Personal and General Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Teaching*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (UMI Publication No. 3503979).

### Selected Professional Presentations:

**Designed and delivered 100+ professional presentations and professional development seminars** on a wide range of literacy and educational topics. A partial list is included below:

- “Ongoing Partnerships Between the Divisions of IT and Curriculum and Instruction.” RTM Fall Education Congress, Dallas, Texas, November 2014.
- “Collaboration Between the Divisions of IT and Curriculum and Instruction to Create 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environments.” RTM National K-12 Advisory Committee Meeting, New York, NY, May 2014.
- “Elementary Science and Content Literacy – What? Why? How?” Ottawa University, Ottawa, Kansas, March 2006.
- “What New & Beginning Teachers Need to Know about Struggling Adolescent Readers.” Greater Kansas City Writing Project, Kansas City, Missouri, February 2006.
- “Making the Reading-Writing Connection in Secondary English Classes.” University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri, November 2005.
- “Tools for Teaching Content Literacy.” Paola High School, Paola, Kansas, January 2005.
- “Creating Competent & Confident Readers.” University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri, October 2004.
- “Why Content Literacy Teachers Matter.” Ottawa High School, Ottawa, Kansas, October 2004.
- “Literacy Links – Read All About It!” Dr. Janet Allen’s Advanced Literacy Leadership Institute, various cities, Summer 2004.

- “Community Chest – Collaboration is Key to Unlocking a Wealth of Resources in Your Own Backyard.” Dr. Janet Allen’s Advanced Literacy Leadership Institute, various cities, Summer 2004.
- “Testing... 1, 2, 3... Testing.” Dr. Janet Allen’s Advanced Literacy Leadership Institute, various cities, Summer 2004.
- “Book Walks & Track Talks: The Importance of Speaking & Listening as Part of Literacy Instruction.”
- Dr. Janet Allen’s It’s Never Too Late Literacy Institute, various cities, Summers 2003 & 2004.
- “Reading Graffiti: Meaningful Marks that Leave a Lasting Impression.” Dr. Janet Allen’s It’s Never Too Late Literacy Institute, various cities, Summer 2004.
- “Responding versus Summarizing: Understanding the Difference between One’s Unique Literacy Thumbprint and a Common Stamp on Reading.” Dr. Janet Allen’s It’s Never Too Late Literacy Institute, various cities, Summer 2004.
- “Teachers as Readers: The Reader in Me and Strategies for Connecting Kids to Books.”
- Dr. Janet Allen’s It’s Never Too Late Literacy Institute, various cities, Summer 2004.
- “The Impact of Whole School Reform Initiatives on Reading Achievement and Teacher Quality.” Presented at the International Reading Association Convention, Orlando, Florida as part of the I.R.A. S.E.A.L Symposium, May 2003.
- “Creating a School-Wide Reading Environment.” Kansas Reading Association Annual Conference, Wichita, Kansas, February 2002.

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

---

- Member, **School Superintendents Association (AASA)**
- Member, **Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).**
- Member, **Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL)**
- Member, **Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors (GACIS)**
- Member, **Georgia Online Learning Advisory Group**
- Member, **International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)**
- Member, **Literacy Research Association (LRA).**
- Member, **National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).**
- Member, **International Literacy Association (ILA).**
  - State Education Agency Leaders in Reading & Language Arts, Committee Member, 2001-2004
  - Secondary Reading Special Interest Group, Member
- Member, **Learning Forward (National & Missouri).**
- Member, **Kansas Association of Middle Level Educators (KAMLE).**
  - State Conference Program Chair, 2006-2007
- Member, **Kansas Reading Association (KRA).**
  - Legislative Affairs, Chair, June 2008

- I.R.A. 2007 Plains Regional Conference, Planning Committee, June 2006-October 2007
- State Summer Institute, Coordinator, June 2004
- Kansas Read Week, Committee Member, 2002
- **Member, Greater Kansas City Writing Project.**
  - Summer Fellow, 1996
  - Professional Development Resource/Guest Speaker, 2003-2011
  - Leadership Team Member for Project Outreach, a grant funded by NWP, 2006-2008

## COMMUNITY SERVICE & ACTIVITIES

---

- **Board Member**, Parkway Towers Condominium Association, 2017-2020
  - Member, Finance & Legal Team Committee, 2017-Present
- **Member**, Plaza-Westport Neighborhood Association, 2016-Present
- **Volunteer Student Mentor**, Cristo Rey Kansas City High School, 2016-Present
- **Participant**, Kauffman Foundation FastTrac<sup>®</sup> Tech Venture<sup>™</sup>, Entrepreneurial Business Program, Completed November 2016
- **Member**, Guardian Angels Parish, 2004-Present
- **Participant & Volunteer**, Kansas City Women in Technology, September 2016-Present

***CANDIDATE***  
***QUESTIONNAIRE***



## Clarksville Montgomery County School System

### Candidate Questionnaire

Dr. Kathleen S. Howe

**Question 1.** Please describe one or two major instructional initiatives you have led, your role in each, specific actions taken, and the results.

Examples of specific initiatives for which I have provided leadership include:

- STEM Initiative: During the 2011-12 school year under my leadership, staff designed and implemented a district-wide, multi-year STEM Initiative that continues to date. The initiative engages students in a STEM curriculum. In addition, it provides opportunities for participation in a range of STEM activities, competitions and events, including STEM certification application and robotics competitions and events such as FIRST Lego League, VEX, FIRST Robotics, BEST, Science Olympiad, and SeaPerch. Over four years, cohorts were formed involving a total of 19 high, 26 middle, and 53 elementary schools as well as 2 centers – totaling over 120 student robotic teams. During the 14-15 school year one team earned bragging rights as a World Winner of the VEX Robotics Competition. By 2016, the district had 4 of the state's 11 STEM certified schools (3 elementary and 1 middle) with several more on track to receive this distinction. The initiative fostered a wide-range of community partnerships and engaged students in real world problem-solving and critical thinking opportunities.
- 21st Century Learning Environment Initiative: In collaboration with Information Technology, my staff embarked on this initiative to support the goal of student success with equity and access. The initiative included an audit that resulted in the development of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environment Framework and action plan for fortifying tech infrastructure, selecting tech tools and resources, and providing staff training. Developing the ability to provide virtual or blended learning was identified as an initial focus, including the selection of a learning management system. A committee of principals, teachers, students, and district staff participated in a review process and selection of a learning management system. I provided leadership for the staff of the DeKalb Online Academy with this learning management system and others prior to district-wide implementation.

**Question 2.** What has been your experience in creating a culture for parents, staff and community that allows for open dialogue/communication to ensure that all voices are heard and respected, and that decisions are made that move the organization forward? Please provide examples.

To address communication challenges and create a culture for open dialogue, several initiatives were launched in which I either led or played a key leadership role. They included:

- "Stay in the Know!" - a communications campaign launching a digital Parent Portal to promote engagement and home-school connection. The initiative utilized a variety of channels, including the district's app, PDS-TV24, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Web page banners, PTA/PTO meetings, and parent/guardian workshops to inform and train students and parents on use of the tool. Three months into the initiative, 37,063 students had a parent/guardian with an active account. The initiative responded to stakeholders' call for timely, transparent and ongoing communication as well as access to information necessary to connect parents/guardians to school.
- "Let's Communicate!" - a communications initiative to inform all Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents/guardians about availability of free translation and interpretive services so ALL parents/guardians can fully participate in the educational success of their schoolchildren. One of the great strengths of my former district is the cultural and linguistic diversity of its students and families. Of the approximately 104,000 students the district educates, roughly 20 percent or 20,000 students,

speak a primary home language other than English. Students come from 157 countries speaking over 142 languages. Often these students and their parents/guardians have difficulty understanding and communicating in English. Although translation and interpretation services are mandated under federal law, the provision of them is essential to the educational mission of the district. Thus, a robust plan and communications campaign was necessary to ensure the academic achievement, safety and well-being of all students. This initiative sent a powerful message to our diverse stakeholder community that the district is committed to wrapping around appropriate supports to ensure their voices are heard and they can actively participate in their child's education.

**Question 4.** What specific actions have you taken to ensure high expectations, consistent academic standards and opportunities for all students?

During my tenure as Deputy Superintendent in DeKalb County and as part of the district's \$34 million dollar Race to the Top (RT3) grant, I led several initiatives to ensure high expectations, consistent academic standards and opportunities for all students. In addition, I took other actions beyond the scope of the grant to ensure the reality of these three important pillars of student success.

For example, as part of the RT3 grant, I led the development and implementation of a PreK-12 Common Core-aligned curriculum to establish a consistent, coherent, relevant and rigorous blueprint of what students should know and be able to do by each grade level and content area. Over 1,000 teachers, teacher leaders and administrators participated in writing the curriculum. Furthermore, I led the development and implementation of standards-aligned online district quarterly benchmark assessments, and related professional learning that included face-to-face, online, and blended options for staff. These efforts and more ensured staff had the tools and training to deliver and monitor student progress of consistent and rigorous standards.

Lastly, an example of an action I took outside the scope of the RT3 grant to ensure high expectations and opportunities for all student involved an audit of the district's Gifted Program.

A review of district achievement scores indicated that economically disadvantaged and minority students were not performing at high levels across the district and were under-represented in the district's Gifted Program. This suggested a problem with gifted identification and participation, which led to the need for a more complete review of the existing Gifted Program. The audit resulted in important information and actions related to access, achievement, and instruction, resulting in a stronger program for all students.