



April 5, 2017

Superintendent Search Committee
Hawai'i State Department of Education
1390 Miller St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Superintendent Search Committee:

I am enthusiastically writing to express my candidacy for supporting the children and youth of Hawai'i through the role of superintendent. My experiences as a former chief academic officer, assistant superintendent, principal, and teacher in several large, diverse districts prepare me well to serve in the role of lead learner in Hawai'i. However, it is my personal interest in further connecting with the land, culture, and especially the people of Hawai'i that prompts me to apply for this particular role. I have long-time family and friends who are from and live in Hawai'i and, in the course of visits over the years, I have come to feel a unique sense of comfort and belonging in a welcoming and familiar environment, different from parts of the mainland where I have called home. I am captivated by the sense of aloha that has time and again warmly embraced me as a visitor and I am eager to have the opportunity to meaningfully reciprocate.

My educational career is marked by relentlessly pursuing equity with excellence for all students by working with communities to strategically build upon strengths while mitigating systemic barriers to every student's right to learn and thrive. I believe that Hawai'i's unique values and strong sense of community serve as global examples of what is possible in striving for excellence. I am drawn to the opportunity to work closely with community members to set a trajectory in which all members of the community see public schools as a premier option for *all* parents and families and that prepares all children and youth to be thoughtful contributors to the community and the world.

Having engaged in strategic planning processes, I have an appreciation for the process in which a wide range of diverse stakeholders came together to articulate common aspirations of student success. The heart of Nā Hopena A'o, deeply resonates with me and my experiences engaging systems of support position me well to work with members of the community to lead the implementation of the strategic plan, building from a strong foundation of previous efforts. This work takes the collective ownership in which everyone embraces their roles – department staff from principals and teachers to custodial and cafeteria staff, and partners from cultural and faith based communities to labor organizations, elected officials, business and philanthropy. It also takes working with legislative partners to ensure policies and resources are aligned to educational goals. In my previous district leadership roles, I have worked with school communities to use data and

local experiences to identify needs and devise strategies based on the prioritization of those needs. I also worked with board members to analyze trends across the district, to allocate resources based on agreed upon priorities, and to create policies and build legislative agendas to advocate for all students and align resources that directly impact every classroom and school. The attention to this alignment is key, particularly in maximizing limited resources.

As a mainlander, I have great respect for the values embedded in the Hawai'ian culture, and am honored that I would even be considered to be your next superintendent. I welcome the opportunity to discuss how my qualifications, commitment to high ethical standards, and especially my desire to learn and work with all community members can be leveraged to ensure *all* keiki have high quality public education opportunities that prepare them for college, career, community and life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Chen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Linda Chen, Ed.D.

Linda Chen

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Experience

Ikigai Educational Consulting, LLC

2016-present

■ Founder and Managing Director

- Provide educational consulting services to urban K-12 institutions and partners to impact all students through system-wide instructional leadership development and strategic curricular reform

Baltimore City Public Schools

2014-2016

■ Chief Academic Officer

- Responsible for the academic achievement of 84,000 students across 188 schools (including charter schools) through strategic and collaborative efforts under the direction of the CEO and in close collaboration with fellow chief officers
- Responsible for the supervision and professional development of principal supervisors, principals, teacher leaders, teachers and all instructional staff
- Attained and served as project director of the Wallace Foundation Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI) grant, responsible for the development and implementation of support systems and accountability for principal supervisors and principals; co-created a leadership tracking system focused on strategic succession planning and capacity-building
- Supervised district-wide functions of curriculum and instruction; special education; English language learners; teacher and leader professional development
- Supervised college and career readiness, early college and dual enrollment programs, CTE educational pathways; alternative education through comprehensive re-engagement of over-age under-credited, and adjudicated youth
- Responsible for school improvement and turnaround efforts; extended learning and summer school, student internships,
- Responsible for coordinating state and federal grants with the state education department (Title I, II, III, SIG, transition to ESSA); liaise with unions, philanthropic and community partners to advance the district instructional leadership strategy
- Supervised enrollment, choice and transfer; attendance, discipline, climate, safety

Boston Public Schools

2011-2014

■ Deputy Chief Academic Officer/Chief Curriculum and Instruction Officer (2011-2014)

- Supervised district-wide implementation of the Common Core State Standards and its integration with the teacher performance evaluation system; district-wide teacher and principal professional development; comprehensive online curricular and instructional resource development
- Supervised curriculum and instruction; educator effectiveness; professional development; and, early childhood offices
- Supervised content development of curriculum-embedded performance assessments and periodic assessments, aligned to the Common Core State Standards
- Supported Network Superintendents in the instructional supervision of schools: conducted instructional audits, walkthroughs; coordinated professional development

- Led coordination of federal Race to the Top grant; liaised with state education department; partnered with city, community-based organizations and foundations in large scale early literacy, turnaround and college ready initiatives

School District of Philadelphia

2008-2011

■ Assistant Superintendent (2011)

- Supervised principals of 38 elementary and middle schools with 29,000 students in one academic division; coordinated supports for schools in all areas (special education, English language learners, curriculum and instruction, intervention and enrichment, parent engagement, discipline and truancy, staffing, labor relations, budget and procurement)
- Provided professional learning support to principals: monthly principal conferences, school walkthroughs, development of school improvement plans, school instructional leadership team planning, principal advisories, mentoring
- Coordinated district-wide transition to Common Core State Standards

■ Deputy Chief, Teaching and Learning (2008-2011)

- Supervised K-12 curriculum and instruction (core subjects, arts, physical education, libraries), programs for English language learners
- Provided district-wide professional development for teachers and principals in content instruction and the implementation of the Common Core State Standards
- Negotiated teachers union contract, responsible for the teacher capacity aspects- designed and implemented district professional growth system including teaching standards, aligned professional development, formal observation tools, Peer Assistance and Review program

New York City Department of Education

2003-2008

- Principal, P.S. 165 (2004-2008)
- Regional Instructional Supervisor, Literacy (2003-2004)

Heinemann Publishing Company

2006

- Author, *Balanced Literacy for English Language Learners, K-2*

Education

Columbia University Teachers College

- Doctor of Education, Urban Education Leaders Program
 - Dissertation: *Starting Strong to Transform Learning, Teaching, and Leading: An Entry Guide for Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction in Urban School Districts*
- Master of Education, Educational Leadership
- Master of Arts, Curriculum and Teaching- Reading and Writing

University of Washington

- Teacher Education Certification Program
- Bachelor of Science, Psychology

Related Experiences

- Teachers College Columbia University** 2017
- Guest Speaker, Doctoral Research Seminar
- Howard University and AASA** 2015
- Guest Lecturer, Urban Superintendent's Academy
- University of Southern California** 2010-2011
- Adjunct Assistant Professor, Online Masters in Teaching Program
 - Taught *Instruction for Limited English Proficient Students* course
- Columbia University Teachers College Reading and Writing Project** 2000-2003
- Literacy Staff Developer
 - Developed and implemented literacy curriculum and comprehensive systems of professional development within schools and districts through modeling instruction, coaching teachers and principals, and establishing systems for capacity-building and leadership
 - Provided keynote addresses and led workshops in national and district-based institutes
 - Supported schools in New York City Department of Education, Burlington (VT) School District, Los Angeles Unified School District, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and China
- New York City Board of Education** 1997-2000
- Teacher, P.S. 163
- Seattle Public Schools** 1993-1997
- Teacher, Hawthorne Elementary

Accreditations

- Maryland State Administrator License
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts License: Superintendent/ Assistant Superintendent
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Professional Certificate: Superintendent
- New York State Permanent Certificate: School District Administrator
- New York State Permanent Certificate: School Administrator/Supervisor
- New York State Permanent Certificate: Public School Teacher, N-6
- Washington State Continuing Teacher Certificate: Elem. Education, K-8