

July 17, 2025

Office of the Governor
State of Nevada
Carson City, NV

Dear Governor Lombardo and Members of the Selection Committee,

Please accept this letter of strong interest in serving as Nevada's next State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a role that aligns seamlessly with my lifelong dedication to educational innovation and excellence. As a multilingual leader, first-generation college graduate, and product of Title I public schools, I bring both a personal and professional commitment to the transformative power of public education. My leadership journey has been defined by bold instructional reform, operational excellence, and a relentless drive to improve outcomes for all students, at scale and with lasting impact. Throughout my career, I have worked in close partnership with local, state, and national officials to maximize resources, align policy with practice, and accomplish bold strategic goals that advance educational excellence for all students.

Over the past two decades, I have led complex school systems through ambitious transformation efforts. As Chief Operating Officer and former Chief of Schools in Washington State's top-ranked Bellevue School District, I have overseen strategic planning, instructional innovation, and the alignment of over \$415 million in annual resources to student-centered priorities. I have successfully led the implementation of early literacy frameworks grounded in the Science of Reading, launched multilingual and STEM pathways, including the state's first public bilingual programs in Arabic, Hindi, and Korean, and expanded access to high-quality early learning. These efforts have yielded measurable gains in student achievement, access, and well-being.

My leadership also reflects a deep commitment to fiscal stewardship and operational integrity. I have developed multi-year financial recovery plans, secured and managed capital bonds and levies exceeding \$675 million, and streamlined cross-functional systems to ensure sustainability and efficiency. I currently lead all operational departments, including finance, technology, transportation, safety, and facilities, ensuring alignment with our strategic plan and community values. My approach is grounded in continuous improvement, data-informed decision-making, and inclusive engagement with families, educators, and community partners.

Importantly, I bring a broad and compelling perspective shaped by my leadership experience across three distinct state education systems: New Mexico, my home state; Colorado; and Washington. This multi-state experience has deepened my understanding of how policy and practice intersect in diverse governance and accountability contexts, from rural and under-resourced communities to high-performing, innovation-driven districts. I have navigated varying state accountability systems, funding structures, and reform efforts, which has equipped me with the agility and insight necessary to lead effectively within Nevada's dynamic educational landscape.

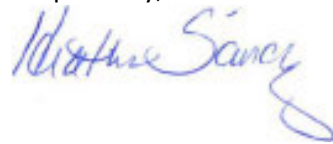
Nevada's bold vision, embodied in the Portrait of a Learner and the Future of Learning Network, resonates deeply with my leadership philosophy and track record of implementing personalized, competency-based learning models that prepare students for success in a rapidly evolving world. I have led similar transformative initiatives and understand what it takes to move from vision to implementation across diverse urban and rural contexts. I am particularly inspired by Nevada's

commitment to access, innovation, and community voice, and I am driven to contribute to the next chapter of this work.

I would be honored to bring to this role a proven record of leading innovative, student-centered school systems; a deep understanding of Nevada's educational landscape and governance; and an unwavering belief in the brilliance and potential of every learner. With a leadership style rooted in collaboration, transparency, and results, I am fully committed to partnering with Nevada's educators, families, and communities to build a future-ready education system that reflects the state's diversity, values, and aspirations.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to Nevada's continued educational transformation and to discuss how my experience and vision can support the state's bold and urgent goals.

Respectfully,



Heather J. Sánchez, Ed.D.



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Dynamic educational leader and consensus builder with the proven ability to move complex school systems toward student-centered innovation, deeper learning and continuous improvement

Duvall, WA | [REDACTED]

Proven executive leader with deep experience in public education systems, strategic reform, and student-centered innovation. Skilled in navigating complex governance structures, leading large-scale funding initiatives, and implementing transformative programs aligned with Nevada's Portrait of a Learner. Committed to advancing student achievement and educator effectiveness across diverse and dynamic communities, including rural and urban contexts. Experienced in managing large budgets, supporting compliance and accountability systems, and fostering collaborative partnerships with state agencies, school boards, and community stakeholders.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, & CREDENTIALS

Ed.D., Educational Leadership and Policy, *Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA*

Executive Leadership & Superintendent Certification, *Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA*

PreK-12 Principal Certification, *University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO*

M.A., K-12 Curriculum & Instruction, *University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO*

B.S., Secondary Education, *Western New Mexico University, Silver City, NM*

Future Chiefs Cohort 8, *Chiefs for Change*

Emerging State Executives Cohort 1, *Women Leading Ed*

Texas P-12 Superintendent, Principal and Teacher; **Washington State** P-12 Superintendent and Principal; **Colorado** P-12 Principal/Teacher; **New Mexico** Tier III Instructional Leader

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Bellevue School District, Bellevue, WA

2019 – Present

For six years, I have served as a member of the Superintendent's Cabinet and as the Superintendent's Designee in a high performing and diverse district of 19,500 students representing 121 countries and 127 languages. In this role, I lead continuous improvement efforts and oversee the implementation of instructional programs, operational systems, and capacity-building strategies to drive positive student outcomes for all students

Chief Operations Officer (COO) (March 2025-current)

- Serve as a core member of the Superintendent's Cabinet and Superintendent's Designee, providing strategic leadership to ensure all district operational systems are streamlined, forward-thinking, and aligned with the 2024–2030 Strategic Plan
- Serve as a key strategic partner to the Board of Directors, providing frequent, high-level updates on operational performance, capital planning, and districtwide strategic initiatives to ensure alignment, transparency, and informed governance

- Provide executive leadership & supervision across all cross-functional operational departments, including capital projects, facilities, finance, technology, transportation, nutrition services, safety and security, athletics and activities, family engagement, student enrollment, and staffing, while directing systems-level initiatives to streamline processes, eliminate redundancies, and align financial and operational decisions with the district's strategic priorities. These efforts have resulted in more efficient, student- and family-centered district operations
- Partner with stakeholders to design and oversee the execution of a board-approved district financial recovery plan aligned with the 2024–2030 Strategic Plan, ensuring all operational and instructional priorities are fully supported while restoring fiscal stability and rebuilding fund reserves in accordance with board policy
- Lead districtwide efforts to integrate technology as a transformative tool for teaching and learning, ensuring thoughtful implementation of hardware, software, adaptive assessment tools, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence to personalize learning and support student success
- Lead the district's long-range facilities planning process to support efficient growth aligned with fiscal and strategic priorities, resulting in effective attendance boundary adjustments, school capital expansion and contraction strategies, and the management of capital bond and levy funds for related projects
- Build and maintain strong, collaborative partnerships with city, county, and state agencies, as well as elected officials, to ensure safe, efficient district operations and advance shared priorities that enhance student learning and well-being

Chief of Schools

Strategic Leadership

- Led PK-12 continuous improvement strategies that enabled the district to achieve recognition as the highest-ranked school district in Washington State
- Directed the development and execution of a five-year Strategic Plan and aligned Annual Plans, establishing a cohesive system for continuous improvement across the organization. Oversaw the development and implementation of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) at the campus level, ensuring alignment with district-wide strategic priorities, resulting in the achievement of Strategic Plan goals
- Regularly communicated with the Board to provide updates, assess progress toward strategic goals, and maintain clear communication for effective board and district relationships
- Built strong partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, Bellevue Schools Foundation, local officials, PTSA Council, and community groups, creating a collaborative support system for students

Teaching and Learning Leadership

- Championed the successful districtwide implementation of a research-based early literacy framework grounded in the Science of Reading, leading to measurable and significant literacy gains in primary grades (K–2), decreasing the percentage of K-2 students in need of intervention by 20% year-over-year
- Oversaw the development and implementation of multiple innovative dual language and STEM-focused programs at both the elementary and secondary levels, including Washington State's first public school bilingual programs in Arabic, Hindi, and Korean, with Japanese launching in fall 2025
- Oversaw the expansion of free and cost-effective high-quality early learning programs, achieving a 20% increase in access annually for both enrollment and program locations

- Led multiple curriculum adoptions to ensure alignment with district policies and approved content standards, while prioritizing the delivery of rigorous, high-quality instruction through a guaranteed and viable curriculum, advancing strategic plan goals and elevating learning experiences for all students
- Led the development and implementation of yearlong professional development plans for educators and administrators, strategically aligned with district priorities, annual goals, and school improvement plans
- Led the successful implementation of multiple Inclusionary Practices (IP) schools, fostering more inclusive classroom environments and expanding access to high-quality instruction for all learners, including students with disabilities
- Led the successful implementation of a high-dosage math tutoring program, resulting in an average of 84% of participating students demonstrating significant growth in mathematics achievement
- Led the establishment of comprehensive K–12 Mental Health Assistance Team (MHAT) supports in every school, significantly expanding access to social-emotional and mental health services. This initiative not only strengthened student well-being but also resulted in clear, measurable increases in students’ reported sense of belonging across the district

Operations Leadership

- Led multiple successful school-based capital expansion projects, resulting in the opening of several award-winning, sustainability-focused and cost-effective school campuses
- Directed campus strategy for bond and levy planning, securing the passage of multiple funding measures—including a \$675 million Capital Projects Bond in 2020 and 2022 levies for Capital Technology and Educational Programs & Operations (CAPTech & EPO)
- Oversaw building-level implementation of the district’s \$415 million annual budget, ensuring efficient enrollment and staffing alignment, responsible financial management, and successful execution of all operational programs
- Led the annual enrollment and staffing analysis process to align staffing models with projected enrollment trends
- Provided leadership and oversight of emergency preparedness and campus safety measures, resulting in secure learning environments and well-coordinated crisis response protocols

Human Capital Leadership

- Led the district’s administrator hiring, retention, and capacity-building efforts, resulting in the recruitment and sustained retention of a highly effective and diverse leadership team
- Provided leadership, coaching, and supervision to twenty-one building and central office administrators to ensure responsive and effective school systems, resulting in the achievement of all school-based strategic plan targets
- Oversaw school-based staffing processes for more than 2,700 employees across the district
- Provided direct supervision, embedded coaching, and ongoing support to both building and central office administrators
- Led the effective implementation of the administrator evaluation process to promote growth and accountability
- Regularly engaged with multiple employee groups, leveraging interest-based strategies to anticipate and proactively resolve emerging issues

Community Engagement

- Cultivated and nurtured strategic partnerships across stakeholder groups, including the Bellevue Schools Foundation, corporate sponsors, faith-based organizations, the City of Bellevue, the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, and PTSA leadership, to elevate impactful fundraising, expand access to essential family services, and deliver aligned, student and family-centered programming. These collaborations enhanced educational opportunities, supported basic needs, and strengthened community-wide support systems
- Facilitated the Superintendent's Community Advisory Council (SCAC), creating a trusted forum for students, staff, families, and community stakeholders to provide meaningful input on district priorities. Through inclusive engagement and structured dialogue, ensured that diverse perspectives directly informed strategic decision-making and strengthened community trust in district leadership

Lake Washington School District, Redmond, WA

2016 – 2019

Director, Accelerated Programs, Choice & Innovation

Provided strategic leadership in the development and implementation of K–12 accelerated and dual credit learning programs, resulting in the launch of innovative choice options and multiple transformative programs within a high-performing district serving 30,000 students

Strategic Leadership

- Served as a member of the district's senior leadership team, contributing to the development and implementation of the district's strategic plan
- Delivered regular updates and presentations to the School Board to inform decision-making and maintain strategic alignment
- Championed the launch of single-domain gifted services within school sites, resulting in increased access for gifted students within their neighborhood attendance areas
- Launched multiple innovative elementary and secondary option programs, expanding the range of educational choices available to families across the district

Teaching and Learning Leadership

- Led a major Consolidated Program Review (CPR) process that resulted in a 30% year-over-year increase in access to accelerated programs for historically underserved students
- Collaborated with Special Services to implement a comprehensive support program for twice-exceptional (2e) students
- Established a K–12 district Innovation program, leading to the successful implementation of dual language programs, sustainable urban gardening initiatives, STEAM maker spaces, and a parent co-operative learning model
- Led curriculum adoptions, enrollment processes, and strategic capacity building for dual credit pathways, including CTE, Advanced Placement (AP), Running Start, and College in the High School, resulting in consistent growth in student enrollment and completion across all programs

Operations Leadership

- Guided the implementation of districtwide enrollment and reboundary processes in response to rapid student population growth
- Provided leadership and oversight for choice school policies, procedures, and enrollment processes, resulting in more equitable access for all students
- Led comprehensive program evaluations and accreditation reviews while strategically managing departmental budgets and staffing allocations to ensure efficient resource use and continuous

improvement. This dual focus on quality assurance and operational effectiveness strengthened program impact and organizational alignment

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Riverview School District, Duvall, WA **2014 – 2016**
Principal, Cherry Valley Elementary School
Led school to earn the Washington Achievement Award for High Progress in literacy and math. Co-led district 1:1 laptop initiative and led district strategy to shift from half-day to full-day Kindergarten model

Bellevue School District, Bellevue, WA **2012 – 2014**
Principal, Ardmore Elementary School
Led implementation of the district's groundbreaking Dual Language Program (Mandarin/English) and oversaw inaugural STEM pilot program, resulting in successful expansion of model to all elementary schools

Poudre School District, Fort Collins, CO **2010 – 2012**
Professional Development Specialist, Office of Teaching & Learning
Developed and implemented PreK-12 professional learning in a district serving 30,000 students. Launched district Instructional Coaching model and led new administrator induction programs

Academy School District 20, Colorado Springs, CO **2008 – 2010**
Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA): K-12 Professional Development
Coordinated and facilitated PreK-12 professional learning for a district over 26,000 students. Led district mentoring program and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) initiatives

Teacher, Instructional Coach and Gifted Coordinator **1998 – 2008**
New Mexico and Colorado Teacher, Instructional Coach, Department Chair & Gifted Coordinator
As a middle and high school level language arts and social studies teacher, literacy coach, gifted coordinator, and department chair, played a crucial role in the learning journey of students

AFFILIATED LEADERSHIP & AWARDS

- **Harvard Business Review Advisory Council:** Selected to shape leadership content for global audiences, 2024-current
- **King County Regional Coalition for Affordable Housing (ARCH) Board Member:** Community Advisory Board, 2024
- **Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI):** Selected to serve on the Outstanding Educator of the Year Selection Committee, 2023
- **Riverview School District:** District Financial Advisory Committee Member, 2023
- **Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA):** Doyle E. Winter Excellence in Educational Leadership Award Recipient, 2018
- **Seattle Pacific University Robichaud Merit Scholar,** 2017
- **Washington State School Achievement Award:** High Progress in Literacy and Math-earned as Principal of Cherry Valley Elementary School, 2016
- **University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Graduate Student of the Year,** College of Education, 2009

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

- Dr. Kelly Aramaki, *Superintendent*, Bellevue School District
[REDACTED]
- Ms. Cindy Rogan, *Board Director*, Bellevue School District (*retired 5/2025*), [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- Ms. Monica Webster, *Board Director and Vice-President*, Bellevue School District
[REDACTED]
- Dr. Vicki Phillips, *CEO*, National Center on Education and the Economy, *former Secretary* of the Pennsylvania Educational Department and *former Superintendent*, Portland Public Schools,
[REDACTED]
- Mr. Pete Gorman, *former Superintendent*, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools & *Co-Founder*, The Forum for Educational Leadership, *Chief in Residence*, Chiefs for Change,
[REDACTED]

Vision and Plan Statement: Leading Nevada's Next Chapter of Educational Excellence

Nevada's education system is on the rise, and I am ready to lead the Nevada Department of Education into its next chapter by building on the state's momentum, honoring its community-driven vision, and delivering on the promise of STIP 2030. As State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I will work in deep alignment with the Portrait of a Learner, the Future of Learning Network, and the 2025–2030 Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils to ensure every student in every community is prepared to thrive. My vision is grounded in the belief that excellence and access must go hand in hand. I will lead the collaborative development and implementation of a five-year statewide strategic plan that reflects Nevada's values, aligns with STIP 2030, and includes clear performance indicators and progress monitoring benchmarks. This plan will serve as a unifying roadmap to expand opportunity, elevate educator effectiveness, and ensure that every learner, regardless of background or geography, has the tools, support, and inspiration to succeed.

Expand Access to High-Quality Learning

I will champion personalized, rigorous, and responsive learning experiences that reflect the Portrait of a Learner and prepare students for college, career, and civic life. Building on my experience launching multilingual and STEM pathways, expanding early learning, and leading inclusionary practices, I will work to scale innovative models across both rural and urban contexts. I will ensure that data is used not just to measure, but to drive improvement, closing gaps, accelerating growth, and celebrating progress.

Strengthen Educator Development and Support

Nevada's educators are the heart of its education system. I will lead efforts to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse and effective educator workforce by expanding licensure pathways, reducing processing times, and investing in high-quality professional learning. My leadership in building sustainable staffing models and mentoring systems has resulted in strong retention and instructional gains, and I will bring that same commitment to Nevada's schools.

Maximize Resources for Student Success

As a seasoned operational leader, I will ensure that every dollar is aligned with student-centered priorities. I will lead with transparency and fiscal integrity, leveraging Nevada's Pupil-Centered Funding Plan to direct resources where they are needed most. I will also strengthen partnerships with families, tribal nations, and community organizations to co-create solutions that reflect local needs and aspirations.

With a proven track record of scaling instructional excellence, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and leading complex operational systems, I am uniquely positioned to propel Nevada's vision for educational excellence forward. I will not only implement STIP 2030 with fidelity and urgency but also begin shaping the next evolution of Nevada's strategic plan, ensuring that our momentum continues beyond 2030. Together, we will make Nevada a rising star in American education, a destination for families seeking excellence, and a beacon of innovation where a high-quality learning experience is not a privilege, but a right for every student.