

Dr. Victor Wakefield

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July 20, 2025

Governor Joe Lombardo
Nevada State Board of Education
c/o Nevada Department of Education
700 E. Fifth Street
Carson City, NV 89701

To Governor Lombardo and the Nevada State Board of Education,

I am writing to express my interest in serving as Nevada's next State Superintendent of Public Instruction. As a student-centered leader with two decades of experience, including ten years shaping policy and advancing student success in Nevada, I am ready to lead boldly and partner with you to ensure that every student in Nevada receives an excellent, relevant education that prepares them to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

I am drawn to this opportunity because we are at a generational moment for public education in Nevada. Historic investments, bipartisan reforms, and broad public engagement signal an appetite for change. At the same time, shifting federal priorities provide states with greater authority and the flexibility to rethink approaches. To meet this moment, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) must sharpen its focus, align with the State Board of Education on a bold vision for educational improvement, and position itself as a key lever of support that uplifts district efforts, empowers families and educators, and delivers results for students.

I bring a unique combination of deep Nevada experience and relationships, a national perspective, and a strong track record of impact in education. I believe my experience leading change at all levels—classroom, system, and state—will position me to effectively lead the Nevada Department of Education with the clarity, credibility, and collaboration this moment demands.

As a former teacher and instructional leader, I bring a practitioner's lens to policy setting, ensuring that decisions reflect the realities of the classroom and advance high-quality teaching and learning for all students.

My education journey began as a middle school Language Arts teacher in Gary, Indiana. Building a classroom culture of rigor, joy, and connection; strengthening school-family partnerships; and leading my students to two years of reading growth in one school year gave me a strong sense of what is possible when students are held to high expectations and supported to reach them. Teaching inspired me to expand my impact, first by recruiting hundreds of high-potential leaders to teach in under-resourced schools across the country through Teach For America (TFA), then by leading TFA's training and support for 250 early-career educators across Clark County, reaching over 15,000 students. Given the high stakes for our students, I led with an unwavering

commitment to quality and excellence across every element of teacher selection, pre-service training, school placement, and in-service coaching. We used internal benchmarks to drive continuous improvement and external evaluations to hold ourselves accountable for results, including a large-scale randomized controlled trial conducted by Mathematica which found that teachers in our program added 1.5 months of additional learning in early grades.

With system-level leadership experience across multiple states and settings, I'm prepared to drive the strategic and cultural shifts needed to make NDE a collaborative, service-oriented partner to districts.

I have held several executive leadership positions over the past 15 years. From 2011 to 2015, I served as Executive Director of TFA - Las Vegas, and I am most proud of the organizational excellence and deep partnerships with schools, districts, and other stakeholders that enabled our laser focus on teacher development and student results. As TFA's fastest-growing region at the time, we built a high-performing regional team, launched a regional board, tripled local fundraising efforts, and received three unanimous votes from the CCSD Trustees to expand our contract. We also navigated federal support by managing the i3 Scale-Up grant from the U.S. Department of Education and partnered with peers nationally to advocate for protecting AmeriCorps funding in Congress.

In 2016, I was promoted to National Vice President for Regions. I worked alongside executive directors, regional teams, and regional boards across a portfolio of 16 urban, rural, and remote regions identified as needing intensive support. I provided capacity building and on-the-ground leadership to drive measurable progress on shared indicators and locally defined priorities. In 2020, I was tasked with leading TFA's pandemic response and matriculating nearly 3,000 incoming teachers nationwide, necessitating rapid overhauls of pre-service training and school hiring processes. In my current role as Vice President for Special Projects, which I have held since 2020, I lead efforts to set and implement strategic priorities across a \$250 million national education organization, align national policy and resource allocation decisions with local needs, and build systems that empower the leaders closest to students to take ownership of ambitious outcomes.

I have led policy change at the state level in Nevada and have the knowledge, relationships, and credibility necessary to lead at this time.

I became interested in education policy because of my in-depth understanding of the experiences of students and teachers in the classroom and my inclination to roll up my sleeves and solve problems. Following consistent calls from principals for more STEM educators and recognizing the challenges and burnout faced by teachers without a strong STEM background, I collaborated with the Nevada Commission on Professional Standards to modernize teacher licensure pathways. Rather than pursuing a TFA-specific state appropriation, I collaborated with NDE in 2015 to create the Great Teaching and Leading Fund, a \$16 million initiative across the biennium that enabled multiple innovative preparation and development programs to scale. As a member of the State Board of Education, I helped implement key 2015 legislative reforms, Nevada's Read by Grade Three Act, the reorganization of CCSD, and the Zoom and Victory Schools programs. As a Guinn Center Fellow, I did the policy work behind Senate Bill 178, which invested \$36 million in students furthest behind and laid the foundation for Nevada's current weighted funding formula.

Every policy success I named was made possible by collaborative and trusting relationships. I participated in Leadership Las Vegas to deepen my cross-sector collaboration and the Leadership

Institute of Nevada to learn alongside principals and superintendents. I collaborated with the UNLV Dean of Education to co-found the Nevada Consortium on the Teacher Pipeline, aiming to align higher education, K-12, and state actors around a shared strategy. Though I left Nevada to pursue doctoral work at Johns Hopkins University, I remained closely connected through research and relationships with local leaders. As a doctoral student, I recruited a diverse group of school staff, principals, and School Organizational Team members for my dissertation, which examined the CCSD reorganization and the role of principal leadership. Throughout my career, I've cultivated an expansive network of leaders across the country who can provide valuable insights to learn from as we continue to build capacity in the state.

Nevada stands at a crossroads. We can continue down the current path, which leaves too many students behind, or we can come together around a bold vision that ensures every student gains the academic foundations, career-relevant skills, and confidence to thrive. If we rise to the occasion, we will strengthen our workforce, renew our social contract, and transform the lives of thousands of children across this state. Doing so will require repositioning NDE and the State Board as vision holders and implementation partners, focused on what matters most and willing to evolve how we support local systems.

My experience leading at all layers of the system, from the classroom to Carson City, has prepared me to bring people together around shared priorities, build bridges across sectors and communities, and deliver results on behalf of Nevada's students. It would be an honor to discuss how my experience and vision align with your goals for the future of public education in Nevada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Victor Wakefield', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr. Victor Wakefield

VICTOR WAKEFIELD, EdD

CONTACT



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EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University | 2020

Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education

Dissertation: [The Role of Principal Leadership in the Success of School Organizational Teams in Nevada](#)

Master of Arts in Teaching

Dominican University, IL | 2010

Elementary Education

Bachelor of Arts

Princeton University | 2007

History, American Studies

Awarded the David F. Bowers Prize in American Studies

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Member, Congressional District 1
2015 - 2017

NEVADA CONSORTIUM ON THE TEACHER PIPELINE

Co-founder | 2014 - 2015
[Legislative Letter](#)

UNLV LINCY INSTITUTE

K-20 Education Collaborative
Advisory Board Member
2014 - 2015

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

VICE PRESIDENT, SPECIAL PROJECTS | 2020 - Present

Teach For America, National Impact Office

- Lead enterprise strategic planning efforts, regional planning and budgeting, and high-stakes cross-functional initiatives in support of TFA's 50-region network, which includes 4,000 corps member teachers (serving 300,000 students), 2,200 Ignite tutors, and 66,000+ alumni working across more than 9,000 schools
- Developed multi-year enterprise priorities and strategies; designed enterprise strategic planning processes for a \$250M+ organization and more than 1,000 staff nationwide
- Revamped regional budgeting model and created a discretionary funding strategy to direct \$25M toward innovation and local contextualization
- Managed regional fundraising hubs (60 staff total) toward a \$70M annual portfolio goal
- Designed a new impact-focused school placement strategy and refined the national field footprint
- Directed corps member matriculation processes during COVID-19 for nearly 3,000 new teachers, requiring rapid overhauls to pre-service training and school hiring processes

VICE PRESIDENT, REGIONAL ADVISORY SUPPORT | 2016 - 2020

Teach For America, National Regional Operations

- Supported a portfolio of 16 TFA regions navigating leadership transitions or in need of intensive support; provided embedded executive coaching to executive directors or provided direct interim leadership to stabilize and advance regional goals
- Served as interim executive director in multiple regions: Charlotte, Detroit, Jacksonville, Nashville, Orlando, Piedmont Triad, South Carolina, Twin Cities, and Washington
- Raised \$10–12M in revenue per year; secured district and school partners to ensure 100% teacher placement; and ensured the staffing, resourcing, and supports necessary to achieve positive student outcomes as measured by internal metrics and validated through rigorous [external evaluation](#)
- Leveraged trends and insights from on-the-ground support to redesign the TFA executive director role profile, improve support provided to all TFA executive directors, decrease transition timelines, and increase role retention
- In 2019, selected by the CEO to the Organizational Strategy Working Group to lead a year-long listening tour and strategy setting process, culminating in TFA's 2030 Impact Goal to double key education milestones for students in the communities we work

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | 2011 - 2015

Teach For America, Las Vegas, NV

- Set regional vision and strategy, led fundraising and district partnerships, managed staff, engaged actively in local media efforts, and oversaw the training and support of 250 early-career educators across Clark County, reaching over 15,000 students
- Led a successful growth plan to increase the teacher corps from 90 to 250 with targeted placement in CCSD's Turnaround Zone (highest-need schools); secured three unanimous 7–0 CCSD Trustees votes to expand, increased public and private revenue from \$2M to \$5M annually, and scaled the regional team from 5 to 20 staff
- Maintained teacher efficacy and student impact while growing in scale according to internal program metrics and [external evaluation](#), which found TFA teachers added 1.5 months of additional learning in early elementary grades
- Worked with the Commission on Professional Standards and the Nevada Department of Education to modernize educator licensure requirements and increase STEM pipeline (per AB 230 and SB 315, 2011), and innovate grant-funding approaches, resulting in the \$10M Great Teaching and Leading Fund (SB 474, 2015)
- Developed several innovative local partnerships, including with the UNLV School of Education and Communities In Schools of Southern Nevada
- Leveraged federal funding to support Nevada growth, including an i3 Scale-Up grant from the U.S. Department of Education and AmeriCorps program designation

CERTIFICATIONS & PROGRAMS

ADMINISTRATION:

SUPERINTENDENT, P-12

Professional Educator's License
State of Indiana
Active License

INSTRUCTIONAL:

ELEMENTARY/PRIMARY

Professional Educator's License
State of Indiana
Active License

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE OF NEVADA

Executive Leadership Academy
Cohort 2: 2014
Capstone: Incentivizing
High-Performing Administrators
for At-Risk Schools

LEADERSHIP LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce
Class of 2013

TEACHER RECRUITMENT DIRECTOR | 2009 - 2011

Teach For America, East Coast Recruitment Team

- Led TFA's on-campus recruitment efforts at Duke University and Princeton University; Hired and managed teams of undergraduate campus representatives
- Increased qualified candidates by 40%. In 2011, TFA was the #1 employer for graduating seniors at Duke University and the #3 employer for graduating seniors at Princeton University

EDUCATION POLICY EXPERIENCE

SENIOR FELLOW | 2017 - 2020

The Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, Las Vegas, NV

- Spearheaded the Guinn Center's education policy agenda during the 79th session of the Nevada Legislature
- Led policy advocacy for weighted student funding, culminating in SB 178 (2017), which allocated \$72M over the biennium to support students scoring in the bottom 25% through \$1,200 per-pupil investments in evidence-based programs
- Co-authored several policy papers related to key policy issues: The Impact of School Autonomy and Skilled Leadership on Student Achievement, Stepping Stones to Success: Revisiting High School Graduation Requirements in Nevada, A New Nevada: Early Childhood Education and Literacy Interventions in Nevada's K-12 Public Schools

MEMBER, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1 | 2015 - 2017

Nevada State Board of Education

- Appointed by Governor Brian Sandoval to represent Congressional District 1.
- Oversaw implementation of targeted funding initiatives, including Zoom Schools for English learners, Victory Schools for high-poverty, low-performing campuses
- Set regulations related to the Clark County School District Reorganization to increase school-level decision-making
- Selected as State Board representative to the Senate Bill 474 (2015) Task Force on Education Professional Development ([Final Report](#))

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

ADJUNCT FACULTY | 2022 - Present

Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Baltimore, MD

- Taught multiple semesters of Current Issues in Educational Leadership in the Master of Science in Education program
- Serve as a dissertation committee member for the Doctor of Education program

MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER | 2007 - 2009

West Gary Lighthouse Charter School, Gary, IN

- Taught 5th, 6th, and 7th grade English language arts, coached boys' basketball, and was selected to the school-wide Academic Leadership Team
- In 2009, 6th- and 7th-grade student cohorts improved their ISTEP pass rates compared to the previous year (from 32% to 50% and 40% to 50%, respectively); both cohorts exceeded growth benchmarks on the NWEA Reading assessment
- Regional finalist for TFA's Excellence in Teaching Award; profiled in [Teaching As Leadership](#) (Steven Farr, 2010) for communication systems with students' families

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER | Summer 2006

The East Harlem School at Exodus House, New York, NY

- Created summer curriculum and taught two sections of Humanities, Creative Writing, and Field Sports to grades 5-8
- Funded by Princeton Internships in Civic Service

STRATEGIC VISION: Reposition the Nevada Department of Education and State Board of Education as **vision holders and implementation partners** who are: (a) laser-focused on a narrow set of critical priorities that improve student outcomes, (b) collaborative capacity builders for educators and leaders, and (c) responsive to the real-time needs of districts, schools, students, and families. These priorities aim to ensure every student in Nevada gains the academic foundation, career-ready skills, and confidence to thrive.

Priority #1: Strengthen Academic Foundations			Table organized as: Objective Draft Strategy/Initiative List Progress Indicators
NDE will help districts and schools ensure that all students experience excellent, evidence-based literacy instruction, enabled by high-quality curricula, and guided by well-prepared, skilled teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand Early Childhood Access: Increase access to high-quality early learning programs ● Adopt High-Quality Curriculum: Strengthen state curriculum adoption and align teacher prep programs ● Strengthen Professional Learning: Ensure PL uses high-quality materials and research-based practices ● Intervention and Progress Monitoring: Strengthen district and school systems for screening, targeted intervention, and support for students not yet meeting grade-level expectations ● Update Accountability Metrics: Align accountability systems to reflect the importance of early literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of students in high-quality ECE ● % meeting reading growth BMKs (K-2) ● % proficient in 3rd-grade reading ● % of schools using high-quality, SoR-aligned ELA curriculum ● Subgroup focus: IEP, EL, FRL, etc. 	
*Note: While Priority 1 strategies apply across subjects, literacy provides the needed clarity and focus. Literacy is the foundation for learning in every subject and strongly predicts success in school, career, and life.			
Priority #2: Prepare Students for a Fast-Changing World			
NDE will align K-12, higher education, and workforce systems to ensure learning is relevant to students' futures and that high-quality pathways are accessible to all students across Nevada's diverse communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Align Pathways: In line with CIEE's recs and Nevada Portrait, scale innovative school models to bridge K-12, college, and workforce sectors (e.g., early college, dual credit, STEM academy, CTE, apprenticeships) ● Strengthen STEM Readiness: Ensure middle school students develop the math foundations and STEM exposure to access advanced coursework and pathways ● Modernize College and Career Supports: Expand postsecondary planning, financial literacy, and advising ● Technology Approaches: Guide AI and digital tool use to enhance learning while protecting students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % proficient in 8th-grade math ● % of students pursuing pathways ● % of students graduating with a CCR diploma, industry credential, etc. ● % employed/enrolled in postsecondary 1 year after graduation 	
Priority #3: Invest in Educators and Leaders			
NDE will partner with higher education and LEAs to modernize the teaching role, strengthen preparation and professional learning for educators and other school-based staff, and ensure effective school leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professionalize Teaching: Improve compensation, school conditions, and advancement pathways ● Strengthen Teacher Prep and Credentialing: Align preparation programs and licensure pathways with the latest research, high-need subject areas, and district/school needs ● Strategic Talent: Attract teachers/leaders to high-need schools, reimagine staffing (e.g., team-based roles) ● Expand School-Based Mental Health Supports: Equip schools with the staff and systems needed to address student mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of teacher vacancies ● % of effective teachers retained ● % of schools meeting counselor, social worker, and psychologist ratios ● High-need schools/subjects focus 	
Priority #4: Provide Families with Voice, Choice, and Connection			
NDE will ensure that families have the tools to engage with schools, access high-quality options, and understand their children's progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand Transparency: Improve data tools and communication around performance and progress ● Support Informed Choice: Implement universal enrollment and transportation systems ● Grow High-Quality Options: Expand access to successful models and innovative schools through LEA support and enabling policy conditions ● Strengthen Accountability: Ensure timely interventions and access to high-quality options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of families reporting clear understanding of academic progress ● % of underserved students in high-quality schools ● % of eligible families using options 	
Priority #5: Lead with Focus and Collaboration			
NDE will support the State Board to set a statewide vision, align policy and resources, and partner with superintendents and stakeholders to ensure the strategy reflects and supports Nevada's diverse communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clarify State Strategy: Partner with the State Board of Education to establish a shared vision and goals, align the NSPF and other systems to reflect that vision, and ensure resourcing reflects priorities ● Improve Governance: Partner with NASS/NASB on District Performance Framework; use a tight-loose approach to balance clarity with empowerment/contextualization; promote effective board governance ● Build Department Capacity: Upskill NDE to support and partner more effectively with LEAs ● Fuel Partnerships: Engage philanthropy, community organizations, and learning networks to scale impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of spending aligned to priorities ● % reduction in opportunity and achievement gaps across subgroups ● % of stakeholders reporting satisfaction with public education 	

Dr. Victor Wakefield

Two professional references:

Dr. Warren Morgan

Chief Executive Officer (formerly referred to as Superintendent) of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District

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[REDACTED]

Sean Parker

Chief Executive Officer of the Center for the Future of Learning

Member of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

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