

Calvin J. Watts, Ed.D.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Visionary and equity-centered education leader with over 25 years of experience advancing student achievement in large, diverse urban school systems. Proven record in strategic planning, organizational transformation, instructional leadership, community engagement, and operational excellence. Nationally recognized for elevating equity initiatives, driving academic outcomes, and stewarding multimillion to multibillion-dollar budgets. Committed to student-focused innovation, culturally responsive leadership, and systemwide excellence.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

Fellow, The Broad Academy – The Broad Center | 2018–2019

Certificate of Education Finance – Edunomics Lab, Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy | 2018

Superintendent Professional Development Program – Georgia School Superintendent Association | 2005–2007

Dispute Resolution Training: Basic Mediation Skills – The Justice Center of Atlanta, Inc. | 2006

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Educational Leadership – Argosy University, Atlanta, GA | 2011

Master of Education, Administration and Supervision – University of West Georgia | 1999

Post-Baccalaureate Program for Teacher Certification – Western Washington University | 1992

Bachelor of Arts, English – Howard University | 1991

Howard University Domestic Exchange Program – Reed College | 1990

DISSERTATION

Title: The Effect of a District-Sponsored Principal Leadership Training Program on Perceived Principal Leadership Behaviors, Argosy University, Atlanta | 2011

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CEO/Superintendent, Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), GA | Aug 2021 – April 2025

- Lead the strategic vision and execution of the strategic plan: 'Our Blueprint for the Future', focused on empathy, equity, effectiveness, and excellence.
- Oversight of instructional outcomes, policy implementation, labor relations, and organizational transformation.
- Provided visionary leadership of all operations in the 10th-largest and 5th most diverse school district in the U.S.

Highlighted accomplishments:

- Created the academic rigor conditions that led to:
 - [the Class of 2024 achieving the district's highest graduation rate \(84.1%\) in a decade.](#)
 - Gwinnett County Public Schools being the only district in the nation to have two 2024 College Board [BigFuture \\$40,000 scholarship awardees](#) in a single year.
 - Half of Georgia's 2024 [National Blue Ribbon Schools](#) in Gwinnett County Public Schools.
- Established the district's first competitive grants department. Writing three federal grant proposals totaling \$20 million over five years. GCPS was the only school district to be awarded all three grants.
 - [National Professional Development Grant](#)
 - [Mental Health Service Professional Development Grant](#)
 - [School-Based Mental Health Services Grant](#)

- Encouraged data transparency balanced with data security. Resulting in GCPS becoming 1 of 29 school districts in the nation to be awarded the [Trusted Learning Environment](#) seal from the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN).

Superintendent, Kent School District (KSD), WA | Jun 2015 – Jul 2021

- Championed equity-focused reforms in Washington's 5th-largest and 2nd most diverse school district.
- Increased inclusive practices and multilingual access across 42 schools.
- Positioned district as a national model for equity leadership and personalized learning.

Highlighted Accomplishments:

- Built collaborative working relationships with six new board members over a five-year period.
- Corrected a six-year reserve spending pattern that resulted in an inherited \$27,000,000 structural deficit.
- Led financial recovery efforts that resulted in a \$60,000,000 surplus, exclusive of ESSER funding, including:
 - conducted a reduction-in-force at the central office.
 - instituted mandatory furlough days for remaining Cabinet-level positions.
 - required superintendent approval for expenditures over \$25,000.
- Accomplished the highest graduation rates for students in 15 years.
 - African American 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) was higher than the All Students rate for the state of Washington.

Assistant Superintendent, School Improvement and Operations, GCPS | Jul 2008 – May 2015

- Provided executive oversight to 43 principals and district leaders supporting over 55,000 students.
- Directed \$249M operational budget and implemented districtwide school improvement plans.
- Supported efforts leading to GCPS winning the Broad Prize for Urban Education (2010, 2014).
- Secured \$3.36M SIG grant for Meadowcreek HS Career Academies initiative.

Principal, Trickum Middle School, GCPS | Jul 2007 – Jun 2008

- Led 190 staff and 2,000 students to the 3rd highest performing of the 17 middle schools in the district.
- Provided supervision and coaching of staff that led to increased writing assessment scores for all students
- Reduced disciplinary referrals by over 50% by implementing activities to increase student engagement.

Area Director of Staffing, Human Resources, GCPS | Nov 2005 – Jun 2007

- Oversaw recruitment, hiring, and retention practices ensuring compliance and workforce quality.

Principal, Annistown Elementary School, GCPS | Jul 2003 – Oct 2005

- Guided school to Title I Distinguished School recognition two years consecutively.

Principal, St. Peter Claver Regional Catholic School, Archdiocese of Atlanta | Jul 2002 – Jun 2003

- Raised ITBS scores by 11 percentile points through rigorous instructional focus.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- Panelist, AERA Virtual Annual Meeting, 2021
- Keynote, Leadership Storytelling Summit, WSPRA, 2020
- Panelist, Aspen Forum for Community Solutions, 2018
- Co-Presenter, The White House & U.S. Department of Education – Innovations in Personalized Learning, 2016

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Member, American Association of School Administrators
- Board Member, University of Washington School of Education (Ambassador Board)
- Board Member, Washington Alliance for Better Schools (Corporate Advisory Council)

HONORS & DISTINCTIONS

- Contributing Author, Leadership Guide to Navigating the Unknown in Education, Routledge | 2021
- Podcast Guest, School CEO Conversations, 2021
- Educator of the Year, City of Kent Chamber of Commerce | 2017

REFERENCES

Available upon request.