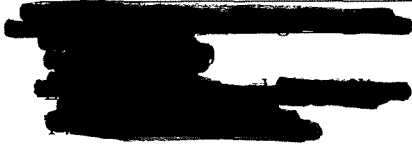


DR. BRENDA CASSELLIUS



EDUCATION

- Ed.D, Leadership and Policy, University of Memphis, 2007
- Education Specialist, Secondary Administration, University of St. Thomas, 1995
- Masters of Arts Secondary Education, University of St. Thomas, 1991
- Bachelor of Arts, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, 1989
- Minnesota Teacher Endorsement, University of St. Thomas, 1991
- Minnesota Secondary Principal Endorsement, University of St. Thomas, 1995
- Minnesota Superintendent Endorsement, University of St. Thomas, 2007
- Tennessee Administrator Certification, 2004
- Massachusetts Superintendent Licensure 2019
- Harvard Public Education Leadership Project (PELP), 2004 - 6/2009/2019/2020
- Harvard Leadership, Transforming High Schools for Instruction, 2008

EXPERIENCE

CEO, Fresh Energy

St. Paul, Minnesota

www.fresh-energy.org

2023 - Present

- Lead all operations, communications and fiscal duties
- Developed our new 5-yr Fresh Energy Strategic Plan
- Drive our mission for an equitable transition to a carbon free Minnesota economy-wide
- Advocate and build coalitions with key political leaders and decision makers to drive political will and shape bold policy
- Oversee all fundraising, grants, and nurture individual donor and/foundation relationships
- Established policy and established a 2 million dollar operational reserve investment account
- Nurture our culture of respect, autonomy, innovation, diversity and inclusion
- Participate actively in Board management, recruitment, engagement and development

Founder - CEO LeaderProof LLC

Minneapolis, Minnesota
www.LeaderProof.org

2022 - Present

- Provide executive coaching to aspiring and/or sitting BIPOC women superintendents
- Consultant to school districts
- Provide counsel and act as an advisor to nonprofits and education organizations
- Guest Speaker, Harvard Education and Business School
- Speaker, How Institute on Moral Leadership
- Speaker, Minnesota Association of School Administrators
- Speaker, Women Leading While Female

Superintendent of Boston Public Schools

Boston, Massachusetts

2019 - 2022

- Responsible for 50,000 students and 10,000+ employees
- Oversee and administer a 1.4 billion dollar budget and secured new historic 125 million dollar annual budget increase to provide a “Quality Guarantee” for every student
- Completed 5-yr strategic plan in 2020 that initiated a 125 school tour in 100 days and over 100 individual stakeholder and community meetings
- Navigated successfully in partnership with the City of Boston and the Boston Teachers Union to shift to remote learning during COVID 19 crisis and ensure the safety and wellness of our students, educators, staff and Boston community
- Passed equitable policies that raised rigor and opened access to greater opportunities for students (New data sharing policy, admissions policy, discipline policy, equitable literacy, and many more)
- Launched in partnership with the City of Boston a 2 Billion dollar investment in a Green New Deal for greener, cleaner school building upgrades, major renovations and new builds to include libraries, air conditioning in all schools, clean potable water, HVAC systems, and outside gardens and play areas in all schools
- Launched in collaboration with the City of Boston a new partnership for fresh, locally sourced food to replace vended meals
- Passed new rigorous graduation standards and raised graduation rates to the highest rate on record for all student groups
- Secured long overdue agreements with bus driver union to improve on-time performance
- Added counselors, social workers, psychologists, and bilingual family liaisons at national recommended ratios in all schools
- Served on cabinet as senior advisor to three mayors of Boston

Commissioner of Education

State of Minnesota

2011 - 2019

- Served as advisor to Governor Mark Dayton and senior member of his cabinet for 8 years
- Responsible for the success of 837,000 students in the State of Minnesota
- Led and participated in state and national policy and administration
- Administered an 11 billion dollar biennial budget. Overhauled MN state per pupil, special education, and integration/achievement gap funding formulas. Extended ELL funding from five to seven years. Created a new American Indian Revenue Program. Paid back schools \$2.8 billion that was borrowed, and invested an additional \$2 billion in funding
- Led a team of over 400 dedicated staff at the Minnesota State Department of Education
- Oversaw state academic standards, assessment, accountability, and support, school support, federal grants and programs, food nutrition, adult basic education, special education, Minnesota libraries, and teacher licensing
- Secured and implemented the No Child Left Behind Waiver and Every Student Succeeds Act through broad stakeholder engagement and collaboration
- Developed Regional Centers of Excellence for state-wide school support and continuous improvement
- Worked with legislators to develop a strong focus on equity and create urgency regarding closing Minnesota's achievement gaps and disparities through enactment of Minnesota's World's Best Workforce law
- Advocated for and secured voluntary free all-day kindergarten for all Minnesota schools
- Established and expanded state-funded early learning to over 25,000 children statewide through targeted scholarships, expanded Head Start funding and Universal Pre-Kindergarten
- Enacted policies that resulted in Minnesota having its' highest graduation rates on record year over year, while closing gaps significantly in every student group
- Created quality measures for charter schools, new evaluation, accountability and support for charter school authorizers
- Secured new funding and expanded Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) to over 700 schools
- Created new School Safety Center with anti-bullying and restorative justice as core pillars
- Strengthened our school bully laws and created a Transgender Toolkit for districts to create safe and welcoming environments for every student
- First in the nation to pass strict legislation which prohibits school lunch shaming practices and provided free meals to kids who qualify for reduced price meals
- Developed and implemented an alternative adult diploma for students over the age of 18

Superintendent, East Metro Integration District

Maplewood, Minnesota

2010 - 2011

- Led alongside ten school superintendents to forward equity and integration
- Oversaw the Integration Revenue Program and two integration magnet schools
- Began strategic planning for the organization
- Partnered with business and philanthropic community

Associate Superintendent Secondary Schools

Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota

2007- 2010

- Responsible for the middle and high school reform agendas which led to increases in graduation rates and academic achievement
- Supervised all secondary schools and principal performance
- Developed new principal evaluation in collaboration with leadership team
- Oversaw career and technical education programming and piloted the first in the nation IB Career Certificate (IBCC) programming at two high schools
- Transitioned district high schools from use of exclusionary admissions criteria for IB and implemented the CORE 4 (AP, IB, CIS, CTE) to ensure greater equity and access to rigorous college ready programming across all high schools
- Supervised and led the district K-12 counseling services and supported the development of SEL and career and college planning with Naviance and My Life Plan
- Supervised Contract Alternative and Extended Learning Office
- Expanded MPS Scholars Early College programming with higher education partners
- Oversaw the expansion of IB Programs K-12 and AVID 6-12
- Turned around two high schools experiencing poor achievement and rapidly declining enrollment through reconstitution through our "Fresh Start" Initiative
- Successfully initiated and led the transition from school buses to Metro Transit at high school level
- Partnered and expanded Project Success programming for successful 9th grade transition

Middle School Academic Superintendent

Memphis City Schools, Memphis, TN

2004 - 2007

- Responsible for the academic performance of thirty one middle schools, directly supervise principals and achievement of 22,000 middle school children

- Organized and led districtwide Blue Ribbon Behavior Initiative K-12 to end corporal punishment and replaced it with Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS)
- Designed and implemented middle school reform consisting of a 6th grade reading initiative, math intervention, rigorous gateway classes, and an attendance initiative
- Increased reading and math achievement scores for 8th grade students and closed achievements gaps substantially in both reading and math
- Organized and led the district's federal Title 1 strategic planning and application
- Participated in the superintendent's five-year academic, facility and transportation plan
- Secured several key community, business and university partnerships that accelerated teacher professional learning, principal leadership and student achievement
- Secured several grants to support the Middle School Reform efforts including Striving Readers with a key partnership with the University of Memphis
- Partnered with the University of Memphis on principal leadership pathway prep programs

Minneapolis Public Schools, Assistant Principal
Washburn High School, Minneapolis, MN

1999 - 2004

- Organized and led high school reform, small learning communities
- Led special education programming and brought school back into compliance
- Strengthened community confidence through relationships and collaboration
- Improved systems of shared decision making among staff and parents
- Promoted school through academic excellence marketing campaign
- Served on district principal staff development team
- Served on district interest based teacher negotiation team
- Nominated assistant principal of the year

St. Paul Public Schools, Assistant Principal
Highland Senior High and Humboldt Middle School

1995 - 1999

- Led middle school reform from junior high to middle school model at Humboldt
- Instituted teacher leadership model
- Implemented interdisciplinary teaming
- Administered all aspects of the school (budgets, staffing, master scheduling, curriculum, etc.)

Social Studies Teacher / Diversity Coordinator
Burnsville Public School, Burnsville, MN

1993 - 1995

- Taught junior high social studies
- Served as District Diversity Coordinator

Social Studies Teacher
Benjamin E Mays School

1991 - 1993

- Served on school leadership team
- Administrator of summer school for African American youth

HIGHLIGHTED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES, ASSOCIATIONS, AND BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Minnesota Association of School Administrators (2007 - Present)

UndauntedK12, Board Member (2024 - Present)

Alight, Board Member (2020 - Present)

Chair/Co-Chair Minnesota P20 Council (2011 – 2019)

Board of Directors Member, Council for Chief State School Officers (2013 – 2019)

Board of Directors Member, Junior Achievement Upper Midwest Region (2011)

National Middle School Association, Leadership Member (2005 – 2009)

Minnesota Association of School Principals

Service on many boards, commissions, and working groups

Highlighted Grants, Partnerships and Awards

Katherine Lowe School Librarian Champion, MSLA (2023)

City of Boston \$126 million invested in schools

City of Boston \$2 billion-dollar bond passed for Green New Schools

\$45 million Race to Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (2011)

\$45.8 million Charter School Replication Grant (2012, 2017)

\$21.2 million Striving Readers Grant (2017)

\$16.5 million Striving Readers Grant, Partnership, University of Memphis (2006)

\$3.2 million Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant, Partnership, University of Memphis (2005)

Distinguished Woman of the Year, Girl Scouts of River Valley (2015)

Head Start Hero, Minnesota Head Start (2011)

Friend of School Social Work (2016)

Champions for Children Award for MN Elementary Principals (2017)

Presidential Award, MNSHAPE (2017)

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Leading While Female, Speaker (2024)

Women of Color National Convening, Speaker (2023, 2024)

MASA Professional Dialogue Series (2022 - 2023)

How Institute, Speaker, Virtual 2022, 2024

ASU + GSV, San Diego, Speaker, 2022

National SHAPE Conference (2018)

Leading for Equity, Aspen Institute (2017)

Education Week, Beyond the 2016 Election (2016)

Doctoral Cohort Leadership Team Training, San Diego State University (2009 – 2013)

No Time to Waste: Prioritizing Actions for Middle Grades Success (2009)

Sable Leadership Institute, Georgia (2009)

National Middle School Assoc., Faculty Member, Institute for Middle Level Leadership (2008/2009)

University of Minnesota Urban Leadership Conference, Maximizing our Potential for Excellence and Equity (2008)