

VICKI PHILLIPS

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SUMMARY

Senior executive with a reputation as a transformational leader and a track record of producing measureable results. Capable of tackling seemingly intractable problems in complex systems under difficult circumstances, designing creative, innovative solutions and moving with agility.

PROFILE

- **Strategic:** Long term strategy development that identifies risk, is realistic about milestones and remains laser focused on the mission – while evolving as new learnings are surfaced.
- **Vision:** Ability to envision the possibilities, translate vision into strategic direction and engage teams/organizations in aligned resource allocation and effective execution.
- **Organization:** Creative organization design and a knack for change management.
- **Performance:** Uniting diverse, often divergent, talents into collaborative, high performing teams.
- **Communication:** Simple, elegant communications.
- **Savvy:** Politically savvy – ability to manage internal and external relationships, interact with individuals/groups at every level, and create productive, uncommon alliances.
- **Unafraid:** Willing to set priorities, make tough decisions and trade-offs, take strategic risks, gain new knowledge, and try new innovations, tools and technology.
- **Solutions-oriented:** Imaginative; not easily stumped; used to tackling wicked, thorny problems and complex challenges.
- **Evidence and data/research-driven:** Focused on impact but with a human touch.

EXPERIENCE

A lifelong career devoted to improving education for those students least served by the public education system – creating models that result in improvements in practice, increased outcomes for students and that have the potential to scale. Diverse leadership experience at every level of the education system (classroom, district, state, national), business and philanthropy. Expertise in designing and integrating policy and practice; blending known solutions and innovation, managing large, complex organizations and uniting diverse talent and perspectives into high performing teams.

Executive Vice-President and Chief Education Officer | National Geographic Society | Current

Serves as a member of the National Geographic Society's executive leadership team working to advance all aspects of NGS impact initiatives and organizational well-being. Leads the Society's evolving and accerating global education strategy and the integration with science and exploration. Focused on transforming the learning experience for millions of students and educators across the globe.

Education Strategist/Senior Advisor/ CEO in Residence | Education Organizations, Ed Tech Start-ups, and Global Investment Firms | Nationally and Internationally | 2016 - 2018

Provided concentrated program design, structure, talent development, communications, execution and investment advice, and, in the case of Educurious, interim executive leadership, to organizations and ed-tech companies devoted to advancing the quality of teaching and learning. Specifically focused on innovations that accelerate the engagement, networking and professional learning of teachers and leaders, the personalization of learning for students, the design of conditions that enable teaching and learning to thrive and the achievement of students who struggle or who have specific learning needs (e.g, English Language). Includes companies and organizations nationally and internationally.

Harvard Graduate School of Education - Dean's Distinguished Visiting Fellow | Current

Periodic lecturer and advisor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Focus: education improvement and public policy; advancing partnerships with the University and education organizations; improving the professional learning of teachers, leaders and education entrepreneurs.

Director of Education, College Ready | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2007-2015

Senior Executive and member of Foundation Leadership Team in the world's largest philanthropy. In collaboration with Bill and Melinda Gates, developed evidence-based strategy and executed largest investment in improving public education -- over \$2.8B in K-12 education in the United States with a focus on: college and career expectations for students; new tools and supports for teachers; meaningful teacher feedback and evaluation focused on improvement; and new school designs and technology that provide students the opportunity to learn in a way that is tailored to their needs, skills, and interests. Recruited top flight team of 100 experts to lead and manage the College Ready work.

Superintendent| Portland Public Schools, Portland, OR, 2004-2007

Designed and lead an ambitious set of reforms dedicated to achieving better results for the district's nearly 50,000 students. Tackled huge budget deficits and student achievement gaps by closing failing schools; redesigning existing schools and making more creative use of facilities; working with business and community leaders to create a rigorous portfolio of high school options; providing staff with tools and training; improving education for young students; and refocusing the administration and the budget on outcomes for students.

Secretary of Education/Chief State School Officer | State of Pennsylvania, 2003- 2004

Served as a member of Governor Ed Rendell's cabinet as leader of Pennsylvania's public education system -- early learning, K-12 (1.8 M students), community colleges and state universities -- and the state's library system. Developed an aggressive, innovative agenda that among other things resulted in: enacting enabling legislation and investing substantial new dollars in Accountability Block Grants to Pennsylvania's 501 school districts to implement practices proven to boost student achievement; making school and community college funding more equitable and dual credit more accessible; increasing the number and quality of early learning programs across the state; making the states' standardized tests results more understandable and useful to teachers and parents;

designing a framework for assisting struggling schools and districts; and evolving the PA Department of Education to a more service-oriented organization. The number of schools meeting annual targets set by the state rose from 62%-81% during my tenure.

Superintendent | School District of Lancaster, 1998-2003.

Took on one of the nation's lowest income, lowest performing student populations (80% of students below basic on state assessments) with intention of proving that ALL students can perform at high levels if given the right set of circumstances. Worked with teachers, administrators, board and community to plan and carry out sweeping changes in the Lancaster Schools, a highly diverse (56% Hispanic, 23% African American), high poverty school district (81%) in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Significantly increased student achievement at every level; reduced by 50% the percentage of elementary students requiring special education; instituted full day kindergarten with 90% of students meeting reading and writing standards; redesigned middle and high schools to more directly meet the needs of struggling students and to provide advanced courses (AP and IB) to high achievers; managed fiscal constraints by reallocating resources, redesigning contracts and raising significant external funding. Prevented a state takeover by significantly increasing student achievement three years in a row and becoming the first school district in North American to meet business and industry standards for quality through ISO 9001.

Executive Director | Greater Philadelphia First Partnership for Reform, 1995-1998.

Grew a broad-based private sector leadership coalition that served as an advocate for education reform in the city, region and state. The Partnership was composed of business leaders, including the CEOs from the region's largest companies, professional organizations, higher education, hospitals, cultural and community organizations, key education leaders and the chambers of commerce. During my tenure the partnership raised and allocated \$100M dollars toward the improvement of Philadelphia schools including setting higher academic standards, adopting new measures of performance, developing leaders, improving classroom practice and designing a system of accountability. In addition the partnership provided technical assistance and guidance to district staff including updating technology, shrinking the central bureaucracy and improving the efficiency of operations resulting in \$29M in management efficiencies. Under my direction the Partnership also took an increasing advocacy role, working with the Mayor and other officials, to garner public support and conduct targeted public engagement campaigns. For example, underscoring the importance of taking the new district assessments which resulted in an increase in the numbers of students taking the tests – 7%, 15% and 41% at grades 4, 8 and 11 respectively - and successfully advocating for a state law allowing charter schools in Pennsylvania.

Deputy Director/Chief of Staff | National Alliance for Restructuring Education, 1993-1995.

Partnership of states, schools, corporations, foundations and non-profit organizations working together on changes in education. Core team member during the start-up and early years of the Alliance. Managed the budget and day-to-day operations during a time of rapid growth, helping to move the organization from grants dependent to sustainability, set strategic priorities, developed talent, increased collaboration and communication, developed and managed multi-layered partnerships.

Senior Executive | Kentucky Department of Education, 1986-1993.

In early senior positions, lead state-wide system initiatives to better identify and serve students with emotional behavior disabilities and improve state support for the array of at-risk students. Then served on the executive team that designed and led implementation of the far-reaching Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, enabling KY to move from 49th to 34th in performance. Carried out complex and unusually challenging responsibilities spanning from equitable financing of schools to extensive changes in governance and management (including the abolishment and reorganization of the KY Department of Education and addressing issues of nepotism and corruption in a handful of schools districts) to significant programmatic shifts aimed at improving achievement and setting the state on a continuous improvement trajectory.

Classroom Teacher | Simpson County School District, 1980-1986

Middle and high school teacher

BOARDS

CURRENT

Enlearn | Seattle, WA
Ocean Exploration Trust | Old Lyme, CT
Resnaissance | Minneapolis, MN

PREVIOUS | A Sampling

Auntie Anne's, Inc. | Corporate Advisory Board
The Teaching Channel | Oakland, CA
School by Design | Boston, MA
Get Schooled | New York
Entertainment Industry Foundation.ThinkItUp Campaign | Los Angeles, CA
Harvard Urban Superintendents' Program | Harvard University
Harvard Visiting Committee | Graduate College of Education | Harvard University
Chamber of Commerce & Industry | Lancaster, Pennsylvania
National College for School Leadership (NCSL) | Founding Board Member | England

EDUCATION

Ed.D | University of Lincoln, England, 2002 | International Leadership | Educational Leadership and Management
Master of Arts | Western Kentucky University, 1987 | School Psychology
Bachelor of Science | Western Kentucky University, 1980 | Elementary Education (1-8) | Special Education (K-12)
Honorary Doctor of Education, University of Lincoln, 2010
Honorary Doctor of Public Service, Western KY University, 2010
Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, Misericordia University, 2004