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THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS of SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Dr. Joseph P. Burke
Superintendent of Schools

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June 30, 2008

Pinellas County School Board
Superintendent Search Team
301 Fourth Street, S.W.
P.O. Box 2942
Largo, FL 33779-2942

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SCHOOL BOARD
OFFICE

Dear Search Team:

The opportunity to serve as the chief educational leader of Pinellas County is an extraordinary chance to move an excellent school system to become the premier public school system in the country. Having served for 27 years in the Miami-Dade system and 7 years as Superintendent in the Springfield, Massachusetts system, I have observed the progress and the challenges of the Pinellas system. Despite the challenges of growth and dynamic shifts in demographics, student achievement has continued to grow. I look forward to the challenge of significantly enhancing public confidence in the Pinellas County Schools and the reputation of the district in Florida and in the nation.

While in the Miami-Dade system, I served as a Middle School Principal, a Region Director for Personnel and for Special Education, and as the Administrative Director for Math and Science for the District. In the District role, I was responsible for curriculum development, professional development and policy development for the Urban Systemic Program, and instructional change in 320 schools.

As Superintendent of Springfield, Massachusetts, Public Schools, I have been leading a diverse, urban system of 28,000 students, the second largest system in New England. The student population is 51% Hispanic, 26% Black, 18% White and 4% Asian. The percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch is 78%. The Culture of Achievement has been the seven-year theme of my Superintendency (details of the major goals and strategies are available). Attached are highlights of student achievement results. Springfield's rate of improvement in English Language Arts (ELA) was 3 ½ times the improvement rate of the State and 1 ½ times the improvement rate in Mathematics. Minority student achievement was more rapid (African-American

students improved by 51.2% in ELA and 67% in Math—Hispanic students improved 63.9% in ELA and 90% in Math).

In addition to student achievement gains, the system was particularly successful in acquiring significant federal grants: an Early Reading First grant, piloting an outstanding PreK model; a Striving Readers grant of \$16.6 million to accelerate reading skills for senior high students; four successive federal magnet grants; two successive Teaching American History grants. Springfield was also the recipient of one of twelve Project LEAD grants from the Wallace Foundation. Springfield's leadership development work is considered among the premier projects nationally. The Foundation is funding a nationally renowned research team from the University of Washington to conduct a study focusing on Springfield's distributive leadership model with teacher leaders. The National Education Association (NEA) has recently funded a research study on labor-management collaboration efforts utilizing the NEA's KEYS survey instrument to assess school climate. Labor-management collaboration on district-wide school climate work, as well as implementation of a new teacher evaluation and development system have become hallmarks of recent efforts for a unified focus on district improvement.

There are two additional significant achievements: 1) implementation of a boundary school plan which changed the ratio of bussed students to walkers from 75% bussed/25% walkers to 25% bussed/75% walkers, and: 2) a city-wide campaign for proficiency called "Step-Up Springfield" which engages all community stakeholders in supporting an agenda of proficiency for all students to meet 21st century standards of excellence.

I am anxious for the opportunity to discuss with the School Board how I can apply my experiences, strengths and skill sets to lead Pinellas County Schools to the next level of excellence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph P. Burke".

JOSEPH P. BURKE
Superintendent of Schools
Springfield, Massachusetts

Attachments

DR. JOSEPH P. BURKE
20-C Halifax Court
Springfield, Massachusetts 01108
(413) 736-9752 (H)
(413) 531-0407 (Cell)

EDUCATION:

ED.D. Educational Leadership, Nova University, January 1992
M.S. Educational Administration, Florida International University, June, 1976
B.A. Philosophy/History, College of the Holy Cross, June, 1973

PUBLICATIONS:

Doctoral Practicum "Reducing the Number of At-Risk Students in Region V
Secondary Schools, Dade County, Florida"

Doctoral Practicum "Improving Mathematics Performance of Eighth Grade Students
At Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Dade County, Florida"

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

June 4, 2001 – Present

Superintendent of Schools, Springfield, MA

Several major accomplishments are significant to cite as part of the Culture of Achievement theme of this superintendency:

- || Successful negotiation of innovative performance-based contract with teachers and administrators.
- || Steadily improving scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests;
- || Specific improvements in achievement of African-American and Latino students;
- || Development and implementation of systemic curriculum initiatives: Reading Plan, Mathematics and Science Plan, English Language Learners Plan, Pupil Progression Plan, and Comprehensive Guidance Plan;
- || Acquisition of the competitive Wallace Foundation L.E.A.D grant, and documented progress on leadership development benchmarks;
- || Development and implementation of a city-wide "campaign for proficiency" with broad-based stakeholder engagement and significant private and foundation funding (Step Up Springfield).

July 1997 – June 1, 2001

Administrative Director, Division of Mathematics and Science, Dade County Public Schools

- || Major responsibilities – development of district-wide policies and curriculum in mathematics and science; Professional development related to Math and Science education; Implementation of NSF-funded Urban Systemic Initiative.

July, 1996 – July, 1997	<p>Region Director, Personnel and Labor Relations, Region V, Dade County Public Schools Major responsibilities - Personnel procedures/practices and contract management for 58 schools (secondary and elementary), approximately 62,000 students. Line supervisor for 25 schools (secondary and elementary) Killian Feeder Pattern/Palmetto Feeder Pattern</p>
November, 1993 – July, 1996	<p>Region Director, Personnel and Labor Relations, Region II, Dade County Public Schools Major responsibilities - Personnel procedures/practices and contract management for 38 schools (secondary and elementary), approximately 47,000 students. Line supervisor for 19 schools (secondary and elementary) Norland Feeder Pattern/Miami Beach Feeder Pattern</p>
January, 1992 – November 1993	<p>Region Director, Personnel and Labor Relations Region I, Dade County Public Schools Major responsibilities – same as above. 47 schools (secondary and elementary), approximately 56,000 students. Line supervisor for 23 schools (secondary and elementary) Hialeah Feeder Pattern/American Feeder Pattern</p>
July, 1990 – January, 1992	<p>Region Director, Exceptional Student Programs/ Federal Programs, Region I, Dade County Public Schools Major responsibilities – Exceptional Student Education Programs and Federal Programs, e.g. Chapter 1, including program compliance. 47 schools (secondary and elementary), approximately 56,000 students. Line supervisor for 11 schools (secondary and Elementary)</p>
July, 1989 -- July, 1990	<p>Region Director, Exceptional Student Programs/ Federal Programs, Region V, Dade County Public Schools Major responsibilities – same as above. 52 schools (secondary and elementary), approximately 58,000 students</p>
May, 1985 – July, 1989	<p>Principal, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Dade County Public Schools</p>

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OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

2004 – Present	Board of Directors, United Way of Pioneer Valley - Audit Committee
2002 – Present	Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, Public Leadership Series
2002 – Present	Board of Directors, Jr. Achievement of Western MA
2003-Present	Advisory Board – Mass. Business Alliance for Education
2002-Present	Board of Directors, National Conference for Community and Justice of Western MA
2002-Present	Board of Directors Regional Employment Board of Western Mass.
2001-Present	Executive Committee, USP Superintendent's Coalition
1993 – 2000	Adjunct Professor - Nova/Southeastern University, Masters Degree Program Courses taught: Organization and Management of Schools School Budgeting and Finance School Leadership

AWARDS:

2006	President's Award, Massachusetts Assn of School Superintendents (For Outstanding Contribution to Public Education)
April 14, 2004	Distinguished Academic Outreach Award – University of Massachusetts