

James Ernest Larsen, Ed.D

Education

- Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership** **2013-2016**
University of Central Florida; Orlando Florida
Dissertation topic: An Analysis of High School Homework Guidelines in One Urban School District
- Master of Science in Educational Leadership** **2001-2002**
Nova Southeastern University; Orlando Florida
- Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies** **1989-1992**
University of Central Florida; Orlando Florida

Experience

- Senior Executive Director—Chief Academic Office; OCPS** **August 2022-Present**
- Manage the 1 billion+ dollar ESSER grant fund
 - Create systems to monitor ESSER funded activities
 - Collaborate interdepartmentally to determine Return on Investment (ROI) of ESSER expenditures
 - Research successful educational/content-area models for areas of need to narrow achievement gaps and increase student proficiency
 - Use data to determine success of innovative teaching models
 - Partner with local universities to create successful tutoring programs for students
 - Create organizational model ideas for potential office of discipline focusing on both preemptive and responsive practices
 - Research best practices to increase high school Algebra student outcomes

Area Superintendent—Southwest Learning Community **July 2018-August 2022**
The Southwest Learning Community consists of 21 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 2 K-8 schools. These 29 schools serve more than 25,000 students. The current demographics are as follows: 28% Black, 5% Asian, 45% Hispanic, 20% White, 35% English Language Learners, and 73% Free/Reduced Lunch.

- Liaison between school board members and Superintendent
- Serve as a team member of the Superintendent's cabinet and participate in districtwide strategic planning, development and evaluation
- Respond to internal and external stakeholders in a timely, accurate, courteous and empathetic manner

- Data outcomes from 2021-2022 reported 92% of schools in the Southwest Learning Community maintained their A, B, C or improved their grade 1 to 2 letter grades
- Learning Community Department Leadership, per Panorama Survey data, reported a 95% favorability rate
- Increased the percentage of schools scoring above the Pre-K readiness threshold from 33% of schools to 83% of schools
- In 2018-19, 55% of schools scored an A or B on the state grading scale and 97% scored an A, B or C grade
- Since the 2018-2019 school year, the learning community opened three new elementary sites, one middle school and combined two schools into a K-8
- Monitor policies and procedures as related to fixed assets
- Manage all operations and functions of the schools in the learning community, consistent with district goals and policies
- Provide input and feedback to district safety initiatives pertaining to new elementary school prototypes
- Direct, oversee and evaluate each principal's performance in terms of the school's operations and student outcomes
- Collaborated with Food and Nutrition services to coordinate student meal program during Covid-19 pandemic
- Manage budget and fiscal responsibilities for the learning community and school-based levels. Budgets averaged approximately \$155 million per year
- Mentor and develop future school and district leaders

University of Central Florida—Adjunct Instructor **2021-2022**

- EDA6932 Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership
- EDA6246 Basic Educational Funding and Management

Executive Area Director—Minority Achievement Office **2016-2018**

Listed are highlighted programs in the MAO office

- Teaching and Learning liaison with safety and security
 - Assisted in the design of the district wide emergency training modules (worked on the tornado training as well as the active shooter training)
 - Sat on the District Incident Management Team (DIMIT) overseeing emergencies as the contact for principals
 - Enacted the first recovery program during hurricane Irma with principals
 - Worked hurricane relief and recovery connecting principals with district operations as well as monitored shelters
 - Worked with district security department to connect discipline, SESIR and arrest data
- Aspire to Excellence—Assisted in preparing talented OCPS students to successfully attend and graduate from the nation's top-tier colleges and universities
 - Students benefited from extensive programming and individualized support as well as tailored resources throughout grades 10-12 in 17 of the 20 high schools

- The Aspire to Excellence students demonstrated mean SAT scores of 1329 compared with the state mean of 936
- Calculus Project—Enrolled 7th grade Level 3 (based on FSA) students (majority minority) into Algebra I Honors and providing the support necessary for them to matriculate to Calculus prior to high school graduation
 - Algebra I End-of-Course passing rates increased from 68% to 83% in 2016-2017
 - The following year passing rates grew beyond 85% closing the gap with the traditionally scheduled 7th grade students (89%)
- Minority Leadership Scholars—Improved the academic performance of minority male students so that they are college and career ready
 - Students were exposed to leadership and community opportunities
 - This initiative served 11 of the 20 high schools supporting 160 students.
- Restorative Practices—Reduced suspension rates by building a school culture that focuses on relationships, giving voice to all, engaging in problem-solving, enhancing personal responsibility, and empowering change and growth
 - The 2016-2017 data showed a reduction of 5,919 Level III offenses (reduction of 47%)
 - Restorative Practice Sessions increased by 284%
 - Middle School out-of-school suspension days decreased by 49% (16,834) in 2016-2017. During 2017-2018 there was an additional reduction of 12%.
 - One time offenders were reduced by 19%
 - There was a 23% decrease in the number of Black students receiving an out-of-school suspension and a 14% decrease among Hispanic students
- Behavior Leadership Consortium—Reduced suspension rates and minimized the disparity of out-of-school suspension rates of minority students in the high schools
 - High schools experienced a decrease of 28% or 1,968 Level III infractions in 2016-2017
 - High schools showed a decrease of out-of-school suspension days by 8,530 or 28% during the same school year
 - The total number of students receiving at least one suspension decreased by 20% for Black students and 24% for Hispanic Students
 - 2017-2018 illustrated an additional 15% decrease in suspensions of Black students and 12% of Hispanic students
 - Sixty-three percent of high schools reduced the disproportionate suspension rates among Black students compared with White students and 89% of high schools reduced the disproportionate suspension rates among Hispanic students when compared with White students
- Chess—Implemented in order to increase strategic thinking skills, stimulate intellectual creativity, and improve problem-solving ability in students
 - Participation in 2017 grew from 38 active teams to 137, inclusive of elementary, middle and high schools; this represented an increase of 261%

- County Athletic Director—Oversaw all aspects of Orange County Public Schools athletic programs on the middle and high school levels
 - Responsibilities included but were not limited to all aspects related to FHSAA, NCAA eligibility, concussion protocol, equipment and field maintenance, eligibility investigations, school enrollment, scheduling, and the monitoring of all athletic directors, athletic coordinators and athletic trainers
- Facility Review—Oversaw the various athletic facility issues involving all new schools as well as renovations throughout the school district
 - Worked with the Facility and Grounds Department to best maintain and improve existing facilities
 - Inspected all elementary school playground equipment installed at new schools or replaced at existing schools
- Curriculum—Analyzed and monitored the Advanced Placement enrollment at each of the 19 traditional high schools.
 - Analysis included gender enrollment, demographic enrollment, and the attrition rates of students
 - Worked with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction on course progressions. Worked with the Chief of High Schools analyzing the current state of each high school to offer continued suggestions for sustained growth.
- Extracurricular Activities Coordinator—Monitored the activities of all after-school clubs and organizations
 - Created a link attached to each school website for parents and community members to have easy and equitable access to all opportunities available at secondary schools
 - Approving agent for any new club or organization throughout the school district
 - Tasked with improving the number of chess clubs on the elementary school
 - Involved in the development of coding clubs on the various building levels.
- Title IX District Coordinator—Responsible for all Title IX issues pertaining to athletics, AP/DE/IB/CTE enrollment, teen pregnancy opportunities, sexual offense and sexual harassment issues district wide (student-based), as well as all complaints filed claiming race, sex, or sexual orientation discrimination
- JROTC Programs—Tasked with creating more consistency in the various agreements with the four major branches of the Armed Services
 - Responsible for scheduling color guards at all district events
 - Assisted in the articulation agreements marrying dual enrollment courses with current JROTC course codes.
- Policy Review—Successfully revised school board policies IMDA and IMDB
 - Wrote revisions to the district sexual harassment policy as well as policies JJ, JJA, JJB, JJC, JJE, JJG, and JJI (Student Activities/Organizations/Athletics)

- Speech and Debate Coordinator—First year in Orange County that all high schools were involved in Speech and Debate in some form or fashion
- Law Committee—Worked in coordination with the Orange County Bar Association to include schools with Teach-In, Shadow a Judge Day, Speech/Poster/Liberty Bell Competitions, Mock DUI simulations and the Big Bad Wolf Trials
- District Wellness Coordinator—Worked with the American Heart Association to increase the number of elementary schools involved in the various programs as well as monitor the instruction of CPR on the high school level through HOPE courses.
- Hiring and Coaching—Participated in the hiring of school-based assistant principals as well as mentored and coached assistant principals and principals throughout the school district
 - Development of the Level V Leaders cohort that works to specifically prepare assistant principals to soon take on the role of principal
- Smart is Cool Initiative—Worked with the Chief of Staff and the Media Relations Department to encourage more students to participate in academic clubs and organizations
 - Participation of schools in a wide variety of academic competitions throughout the state of Florida
- Rivalry Love—Worked with the Chief of Staff and the Media Relations Department to promote sportsmanship amongst the 19 traditional high school
 - Instituted the first district-wide sportsmanship award program where high school coaches and athletic directors recognized student athletes from opposing schools who have demonstrated high levels of sportsmanship
- Outreach—Taught classes on the Approach to Athletics and NCAA Eligibility to staff members as well as student athletes and parents

Executive Area Director—Southeast Learning Community; OCPS 2013-2015

- Assisted the Area Superintendent with the supervision and evaluation of 33 Orange County Public Schools (4 High Schools, 8 Middle Schools, and 21 Elementary Schools)
- Focus Schools included 3 of the high schools and the 8 middle schools
 - Eighty-two percent of focus schools improved their state reported school grade numbers
 - Three schools improved their overall grade levels (1 decreased)
 - Sixty-four percent of the schools achieved the grade of A/B (increased from 45%)
 - All three high schools would have been A schools under the 2013 grading scale (due to the 75 point increase the school grades were 1 A, and 2 Bs)
- Assisted with and monitored the budgets of the 33 schools
- SALT Advisory Council—Member of the Area Superintendent and Teaching and Learning Advisory Council; the focus of this organization was to make district-wide curriculum decisions, inform policy, and analyze instructional programs and practice

- District Strategic Plan—Assisted in the development and monitoring of the District Strategic Plan
- Hiring—Hired multiple assistant principals and principals within the Southeast Learning Community
- Coaching and Mentoring—Coached principals, assistant principals, deans, and instructional coaches to reach the next level
 - Provided targeted mentoring with Level V Leaders throughout the school district
- Professional Improvement Plans—Developed, implemented, and monitored principals placed on improvement plans over a two year period; all principals successfully completed their plans and remained in their roles
- Assistant Principal Meetings—Managed the Assistant Principal Meetings for the Southeast Learning Community (54 total assistant principals)
 - Meetings consisted of instructional collaboration on the Marzano Model, walkthroughs and operational issues
- Marzano Framework—Developed, maintained and monitored the overall district Marzano data by learning community
 - The Southeast Learning Community (33 schools) averaged 483 observations per building (14-15) with an average IP score of 2.64. Actionable feedback was also monitored randomly throughout the school year
- Progress Monitoring Meetings—Conducted monthly progress monitoring meetings with the Area Superintendent for all 33 schools
 - All instructional structures and programs were reported on during these meetings
- Operations—Responsible for monitoring Certify (FTE) errors, emergency procedures, health code violations, ACFI violations, iObservation data and feedback, School Improvement Plans, school-based custodial and maintenance issues, attendance data (focus schools averaged between 94% and 98%), and discipline data (Southeast Learning Community decreased Level III and Level IV suspensions by 13% overall)
- Summer Graduation—Coordinated the summer graduation for all 19 traditional high schools

West Orange High School; Winter Garden, Florida

2007-2013

Principal

Managed and operated two campuses (Main and 9th Grade Center)

- Largest High School in OCPS--3,400 students and 253 staff members in 2013
- Managed a 15.5 million dollar budget, yearly
- Systemically improved the school grade from a D to an A over this time period.
- Improved the schools graduation rate from 72% in 2007 to 92%
- Increased the rigor through Advanced Placement Courses from 467 exams (212 students) in 2008 to 2,100 (1054 students) in 2013
- Ranked #1 high school in Orange County (2012) in Biology EOC scores, Florida Writes scores and improvement in Algebra EOC scores from 2011 to 2012

- Raised ACT composite average score above the state average in 2010 for the first time and continued to remain above the state average
- Dropout rate decreased from 1.3% to 0.1% in 2007
- Led the West Orange Consortium consisting of 13 feeder schools
- Organized, developed and facilitated professional development
- Mentored and coached colleagues on the assistant principal level as well as principal level
- Mentored and coached teachers who were aspiring administrators
- Effectively communicated the needs of the school with community leaders
- SACS Accreditation team member
- Completed the comprehensive rebuild on the new campus facility

Lockhart Middle School; Pine Hills, Florida **2006-2007**
Principal

West Orange High School; Orlando Florida **2004-2006**
Assistant Principal

Olympia High School; Orlando, Florida **2003-2004**
Assistant Principal

Lee Middle School; Orlando, Florida **1999-2003**
Administrative Dean

Memorial Middle School; Orlando, Florida **1993-1999**
Synergistic Lab Instructor/Mathematics Instructor

Edgewater High School; Orlando, Florida **1993-1994**
High School Credit and GED Instructor

Awards and Honors

Highlighted by the Council for Educational Change (Legacy of Leadership)	2016
Inaugural Commission of Education's Leadership Academy Member	2012
President of the High School Principals Organization	2012
Instructional Technology Governance Team	2012
Executive Steering Team for Teaching and Learning	2012
UCF/Progress Energy Leadership Academy	2010-2011
Cambridge Who's Who of Executives, Professionals, and Entrepreneurs	2010
Urban League Humanitarian Award (Globe of Kindness)	2009
Teacher of the Year Memorial Middle School	1999
Orange County Teacher of the Year Finalist	1999

Affiliations and Professional Learning

OCPS ACE Community Foundation, member	2020-2022
Tangelo Park Rosen Foundation, member	2018-2022
Harvard Summer Institute for Public Education Leadership Project (PELP)	2019
Harvard Summer Institute on College Admissions	2017
Central Florida College Access Network, member	2016-2018
Orange County Bar Association Education Law Committee, member	2015-2016
Harvard Summer Institute on Narrowing the Achievement Gap	2013 and 2014

References

Dr. Barbara Jenkins
 Orange County Public Schools, Superintendent (Retired)
 407-398-2619

Dr. Michael Armbruster
 Orange County Public Schools, Deputy Superintendent
 407-716-8053

Dr. Scott Fritz
 Orange County Early Learning Coalition, Chief Executive Officer
 813-390-5927

Dr. James Lawson
 Orange County Public Schools, Chief Minority Officer (Retired)
 407-456-4679

Rhonda Hunt
 Orange County Public Schools, Principal
 352-536-0968