



# Shawn T. Loescher, Ed. D.

The following documents are included in this packet:

One page candidate summary

Cover letter

Letters of recommendation (4)

Philosophy statements (3)

Resume





# Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**URBAN DISCOVERY SCHOOLS**  
**SAN DIEGO, CA (2017-PRESENT)**

## RECENT WORK EXPERIENCE

**Alvord Unified School District, Riverside, CA**  
Executive Director | 2014-2017

**San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, CA**  
Director | 2009-2014  
Program Specialist | 2007-2009

**School of the Arts at Madison High School, San Diego, CA**  
Small Learning Community Director | 2004-2007

## EDUCATION

**Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ**  
Ed.D. Leadership and Innovation

**National University, San Diego, CA**  
M.S. with Honors, Educational Administration

**Berklee School of Music, Boston**  
B.A., Performance, Magna Cum-Laude

## CERTIFICATES / LICENSES

- California Department of Ed., Admin. Services Credential
- CITI Certifications: Social & Behavioral Research, Indigenous Persons Research
- Level I-III Educational Supervision, UC San Diego

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Loescher, S. T. (2020). From risk-averse to risk immersed: Leading schools through a paradigm-shattering event (Supporting the transformation of school teams). Silver Lining for Education, Conversations About the Future of Education.
- Loescher, S. T. (2019). Embrace ambiguity! Why predictive metrics aren't helping. A TED-Ed Innovative Educators TED Talk at the TED Summit, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. Available at: <https://youtu.be/qIBf2CQmeT0>
- Loescher, S. T. (2018). Hope as strategy: The effectiveness of an innovation of the mind. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University.



"In Washoe County School District, I see a community where hope, opportunity, creativity, and innovation can bring us together to prepare our children to address the challenges they will face in their lifetime." **Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D.**

## SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Leader of school redesign initiatives that improved graduation rates by >10% points
- Reversed negative standardized test trends and created action plans to improve student achievement meeting better than 100% of annual goals
- Garnered additional institutional resources for public education more than \$37,000,000 over a five-year cycle to support innovations in education and student learning experience
- Led educator pipeline initiative to address disparities between desired diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and hiring
- Developed rapid response framework for student well-being and achievement that was featured in international publications for their results
- Revised course of study to implement post-secondary ready graduation requirements.

## SELECTED AWARDS

- TED-Ed Innovative Educator  
One of 16 Worldwide Awardees
- Administrator of the Year, Region 18  
CA School Boards Association
- Commander's Award for Public Service  
United States Department of the Army

FROM THE DESK OF:

**SHAWN T. LOESCHER, Ed.D.**

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February 18, 2022

The Board of Trustees  
Washoe County School District  
C/O Superintendent Search Committee  
The Bryan Group  
Delivered via Email to: info@tbgleaders.com

To the selecting panel and the Board of Trustees,

From humble beginnings that trace back to 1857 to a modern school district that exemplifies progressive public education with an equity-based agenda, Washoe County School District (WCSD) has many accomplishments to celebrate. However, as we look to the future of public education in a post-pandemic era, new challenges await. These are born of changes in the way we work, our need to return to respectful discourse in politics, to confront the epidemic of racial and gender orientation biases, to learn how our perceptions of students shape their and our world, and the existential threat of climate change. The solutions to these complex socio-technical issues will not be solved by any individual agency or public forum. Nevertheless, it is my firm belief that it will be through the leadership of those in public education, and in the social sector, that we can confront and solve the challenges of our time together. We must be willing to recognize this as a time ripe with opportunity to do what is right for our children, our communities, and our common humanity. This is why I believe that our public education leaders must be innovators who are prepared to seek out interconnected solutions that strive to create a fairer, just, ardent, and sustainable world for us all.

Let this serve as my letter of introduction as the ideal candidate to be our next Superintendent for WCSD. I am well versed in the challenges that lay ahead and am prepared to dedicate myself fully to this position that I regard as pivotal to the development of the greater region of Washoe County. I do this as the father of four children including a child who has a diagnosis and an Individualized Education Plan, a husband and partner to an individual who is an active parent in public education, an internationally award-winning educator and social scientist, and an educational practitioner with over 25 years of professional experience in advancing student achievement. The purpose of my candidacy as the Superintendent of WCSD is to demonstrate my belief that the district and I represent a synergistic alignment that will advance prosperity in the region. My goal in this application is to demonstrate the type of contribution that I would make to WCSD. It is my belief that the introductory material provided exhibits my ability to lead with compassion and the courage to do what is right

for our children, to support a bold vision of the future of our learning community, and to share my love, hopes, and desires for our students, district, and the sacred trust that is public education.

A great deal of my interest in this position is based upon the posting which is seeking both traditional and non-traditional candidates for the Office of Superintendent. I represent both of these attributes having worked in traditional and non-traditional educational settings. With over two decades of progressive leadership roles, I have a proven successful track record in transformational leadership in public education institutions and non-profits. Most recently my work as a visionary thinker and educational leader was acknowledged by TED as one of 16 world-wide awardees of the TED-Ed Innovative Educator prize. My recent research, based upon my student access and equity work in systems level and change theories, was recognized with an award from the American Educational Research Association. These acknowledgements were based upon my focus on teaching and learning, social systems redesign to address opportunity gaps, and active engagement in equity-based models to address critical issues that are embedded in social justice.

The region of Washoe County is rich in opportunities from the southwest schools in Incline Village on the shores of pristine Lake Tahoe, to the clustering of schools in bustling Reno and Sparks, to those in Gomes through Silver Lake and North Valley, to the K-12 school model in Gerlach. What I believe we can build on together is an outstanding reputation of service to the community through a balanced education system that is student focused. What you can expect from my contributions are: a dedicated servant leadership approach using a stewardship model; a vision for innovation in education; having equity, diversity, and inclusion at the forefront of every conversation; a human-centered whole systems approach to redesign; and a laser like focus on student well-being and achievement. With this letter of introduction, I respectfully submit my name and résumé for your consideration as our next Superintendent of WCSD to be of service to our students, parents/guardians, faculty, staff, and community of Washoe County.

For our students,



Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D.



Stephanie Ng  
New York, NY 10013

Board of Education Office  
Washoe County School District  
425 East 9th Street  
Reno, NV 89512

February 4, 2021

To Washoe County School District Board of Trustees,

It is with tremendous enthusiasm that I am writing a letter of recommendation for Shawn Loescher for the Superintendent position at Washoe County School District. I first met Shawn in 2019 when my team selected him to be 1 of our 16 TED-Ed Innovative Educators, TED's global distinguished educator program. Shawn joined a prestigious group of innovative educational leaders from rural, urban or suburban communities across 20+ countries.

My early work with Shawn was supporting and coaching him on developing his [TED-Ed Talk](#) to be recorded at TED's conference called TEDSummit. It became pretty apparent that Shawn not only had a plethora of innovations to share but he also was a brilliant storyteller. His public speaking is always based on comprehensive research, but more importantly, he intertwines his data with individual stories, always centering the work in what is happening with his students, families, teachers and the San Diego community. On calls with fellow TED-Ed Innovative Educators, Shawn is a remarkable leader who is curious to learn from his fellow Innovative Educators and push the thinking of the group on complex ideas. I found Shawn to be receptive to feedback, eager to collaborate, and strikes the balance of spreading optimism while addressing hard truths. In addition, Shawn has been an integral thought partner to my team and I in developing design thinking projects for fellow TED-Ed Innovative Educators.

At the start of the global pandemic, Shawn redesigned Urban Discovery Schools' operating structure in one of the most innovative ways I've seen. Through their Coaching, Outreach and Support (COS) model, Shawn led his team to reimagine educator and support team roles to maximize a learning environment for optimal wrap-around support with consistent, high-performing educational outcomes. Shawn's instincts for rapid pivots and ability to build consensus with his Board and staff are incredibly impressive, with some highlights being changes to classroom support roles and allocation of immediate dollars towards teacher mental health and emergency family resources.

But what I cherish the most about working with Shawn is his clarity in creating space for marginalized voices; he has unwavering conviction in supporting and honoring Black and Brown voices. Shawn creates systems to combat injustices and consistently moves the needle in creating a more open and equitable educational structure for all students.

I have full confidence that Shawn will thrive as Washoe County's next superintendent; he has a proven track record of serving localized and global needs as an educational change agent. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Ng". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Stephanie Ng  
Director of Programs, TED-Ed



# MICHAEL P. BISHOP, SR., CBO

**November 8, 2021**

To Whom It May Concern:

Let this serve as a letter of recommendation for Dr. Shawn T. Loescher for Superintendent of Schools. I had the pleasure of working directly with Dr. Loescher during my term as a special consultant to Alvord Unified School District where I was the interim Assistant Superintendent of Business Services/CBO. In this capacity, Dr. Loescher and I worked together as fellow Cabinet Members on a variety of issues that were vital to the advancement of the district's mission. I have had the opportunity to observe his visionary, dynamic and adaptable leadership style and ability to handle high tension situations both in the Cabinet Room, during public meetings, and in district level meetings.

His role as the Executive Director of Accountability and Education Innovations encompassed a broad range of change agent assignments including the facilitation, coordination and implementation of all aspects of the district strategic plan and a division of the district that drove positive change for student learning. In my time working with Dr. Loescher, he had the dual roles as being from the office of the Superintendent and overseeing a division. I have known of his work in educational technology, information technology, college and career readiness, state and federal programs, career technical education, secondary school redesigns such as small learning communities, personalized learning systems development, alternative education, library media services, adult education, a variety of instructional and school site areas for improvement, and the revision of all aspects of district policy with an clear eye on equity, access, and action for student achievement. With a highly diverse assignment, he demonstrated the ability to be an innovator with clear direction and organizational goals. He facilitated community building and developed support structures that were imbedded in his firm belief that all students can learn at high levels.

In working with Dr. Loescher I found that he is clearly focused on the needs of students and their families, understood the implications of district practice on teaching and learning in the classroom, and was highly in tuned with the systems changes that needed to be coordinated and planned for the success of our schools. To this end, he was a firm advocate for resourcing schools and divisions to meet the needs of all students. As a strategic planner who was responsible for the development of cascading goals to align schools to district goal, he had a firm understanding of finance, leveraged resourcing, and how to maximize funding to provide additional student supports.

Having worked with Dr. Loescher I am confident in his capabilities, character, ability to make difficult decisions, capability to inspire people to change their practice when necessary, and lead them to success. From my observations, he believes in the practice of service based leadership and demonstrates a strong work ethic that others around him follow. He is calm in both high pressure and crisis settings, adaptable, a skilled facilitator and has the propensity to deconstruct complex problems into workable solutions while turning them into opportunities for improvement. He has demonstrated to me that he is honest and adheres to the highest standards of integrity.

Without reservation, I recommend Dr. Shawn T. Loescher. He has proven himself as a highly desirable and innovative educational leader that will be an asset to your organization. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any additional questions that you have.

Sincerely,

**MPBishop, Sr**

Michael P. Bishop Sr.  
Retired Chief Business Officer  
Owner and Principal  
MICHAEL BISHOP & ASSOCIATES, INC.



February 3, 2022

Subject: Letter of support for Dr. Shawn Loescher

It gives me great pleasure to write this letter in support of Dr. Shawn Loescher's application for Superintendent for the *Washoe County School District*. To provide some context for my remarks: I am Dr. Punya Mishra, *Associate Dean for Scholarship and Innovation* at the *Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College*, at *Arizona State University*. I have also provided a brief bio statement at the end of the letter to provide a better sense of my work and experience.

I have known Dr. Loescher for over 5 years now though I have been familiar with his work and achievements for longer than that. Over the past few years, I have had the pleasure of many conversations with Dr. Loescher about a range of topics: the goals of education; the importance of values and principles to the work educational leaders do; how one can bring a design-mindset and action research to educational leadership. In each case I have found Dr. Loescher to be one of the most intelligent and thoughtful individuals I have had the pleasure of speaking with. And this intelligence and thoughtfulness is complemented by a humanistic and caring perspective. He combines these traits with a forward-looking, equity-driven vision of what public education can and should be. In short, I believe that Dr. Loescher is transformational leader, who brings a deep knowledge of educational systems combined with a strong set of core philosophical values to the work. He is strategic in his thinking and practice, even while recognizing the complexities of the work at hand. He brings the sensibility of a designer, the depth of thought of a philosopher, and a recognition the urgency of the work we do as educators. He epitomizes to me what a thoughtful, deliberate and reflective leader should be. It is no surprise, therefore that in 2019, Dr. Loescher was named one of the 16 worldwide recipients of the *TED-Ed Innovative Educators Award*. A year after that he received the *Action Research Dissertation Award* from the *American Educational Research Association*. These two recognitions, capture the manner in which Dr. Loescher truly bridges the research and practice gap, a gap that many bemoan, but few do anything about.

As I thought about this letter there were many different ways I could have gone. I could have spoken to his many awards and recognitions, to his skills and experience, but I will restrict myself to three stories, stories that capture what makes Dr. Loescher truly special as an educational thinker and doer.

The first story concerns, a webinar series that I am a part of. This series titled *Silver Lining for Learning* started in March 2020, as we felt the first impact of the COVID19 pandemic, and are an ongoing series of conversations on the future of learning with educators and educational leaders from across the globe. Hosted by Chris Dede (*Harvard University*), Curt Bonk (*Indiana University*), Yong Zhao (*University of Kansas*), and me, this series began under the "dark cloud" of the covid crisis and continues today as a space to discuss the creation of equitable, humanistic and sustainable learning ecosystems that meets the needs of all learners. Dr. Loescher was a guest on the show and spoke passionately about how the *Urban Discovery School* responded to the crisis. At a time when many schools shut their doors, the *Urban Discovery School*, under his leadership, transitioned to remote learning over the weekend through a process of thorough preparations in the previous weeks. And more importantly the organization tried to ensure that *all* students were served—even those with special needs, those who were emergent bilingual (what their schools calls English Language Learners to honor their current knowledge), and those that live in underserved communities. There are so many important messages that he shared that day with us, and it still remains one of my favorite episodes, almost two years later, and an inspirational tale for others to follow and be inspired by.

Second, is another opportunity I had to formally speak with Dr. Loescher, this time for a podcast that I host, called *Value Laden*. This podcast emerged from a recognition on my part that we educators often do not have enough opportunities to discuss the moral dimensions of work we do. I truly believe that the work we do is value laden, in that it has intrinsic value (and of importance to society) but also that there is a strong ethical

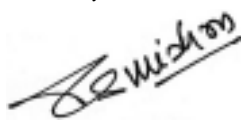
and moral dimension to this work. In order to learn more about this (speaking selfishly) but also to share what I had learned, I started a this podcast, titled *Value Laden: Conversations with Educational Leaders*. In this podcast I spoke with inspirational educational leaders about the meaning and practices of ethical leadership. Dr. Loescher was one of the first people I reached out to for being a guest on this show. In our conversation we discussed both how he developed his moral/ethical framework (his biographical back-story as it were) and how it has played out in his professional life as an educational leader (across multiple contexts and challenges). Dr. Loescher spoke eloquently about the power of processes and changing systems that maintain oppressive practices. As he suggested, these processes and systems *create* our culture (the stories we tell, and things we do) and define what is permissible and what is not. And creating change that will live on beyond us will requires dismantling these existing processes, systems and culture and creating new ones. Again, this is an episode I strongly recommend to everybody even today, both for its educative value but also as an opportunity to truly get to know Dr. Loescher and his educational philosophy/approach.

Finally, I would like to mention a brief blog post on his website, about the meaning where a teacher's desk is located. And though it may appear trivial, I mention this is because I see it as a wonderful example of Dr. Loescher's inherent curiosity, his willingness to questions things that all of us often take for granted—even something as simple as the location of a teachers desk. As he explained, it was prompted by a process of deconstruction by deliberately questioning the purpose of a teacher's desk and the symbolic meaning inscribed in where it is located. Whether the desk is at the front of the room, or at the side against a wall, or removed altogether sends very different messages to the students, about power and separation in one case, versus a shared work/learning space that seeks to erase some of these distinctions in another. This example stands out to me because it speaks to the designerly way of looking at the world, undergird by a deeper moral system that deeply respects learners for that they bring to the classroom.

I am sure the others who write letters in support of Dr. Loescher will speak to his many accomplishments (and there are many) to his capabilities as a collaborative leader, his ability to create organizations that are resilient and evolving, as well as his personal role as an agent of positive change. I have taken a slightly different, more personal, human-orientated tack. In large part because I am seeking to capture the wonderful humanity of Dr. Loescher. He wears the breadth and depth of his knowledge and experience lightly, but most important it is this humanity is underlies his commitment to the care, wellbeing and learning of everyone he works with, but most importantly to the learners in his care.

As is clear, I strongly recommend Dr. Loescher for the position of Superintendent of the *Washoe County School District*. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Punya Mishra, Professor  
*Associate Dean of Scholarship & Innovation*  
*Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College*  
*Arizona State University*

*Punya Mishra: A Short Bio*

Dr. Punya Mishra is *Associate Dean of Scholarship & Innovation* and *Professor* in the *Division of Educational Leadership & Innovation* in the *Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University*. He also has an affiliate appointment in the *Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts*. Prior to ASU, Dr. Mishra was at *Michigan State University* where he directed the award-winning *Master of Arts in Educational Technology* program. In 2016 he received the *William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award* for his comprehensive and sustained record of scholarly excellence in research and creative activities, instruction and outreach. He has served on multiple leadership positions in national and international organizations. He is internationally recognized for his work in technology integration in teaching; the role of creativity and aesthetics in learning; and the application of design-based approaches to educational innovation. He has received over \$7 million in grants; published over 100 articles and edited 3 books. Dr. Mishra is an award-winning instructor who has taught courses at undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels in the areas of educational technology, educational psychology, design, and creativity. He is an engaging public speaker, as well as an accomplished visual artist and poet.

February 14, 2022

To the Reviewing Panel and Board of Trustees for Washoe County School District,

It is with great honor and enthusiasm that I write this strong letter of recommendation for Shawn Loescher for Superintendent of Washoe County School District. Personally, and professionally, I can think of no better person to entrust the leadership of the students, teachers, staff, facilities, and communities that make up this broad, diverse, and evolving district.

The Design Forward Alliance promotes the value of design, in all its forms, towards economic, civic, and social development. We do so through igniting conversation and action around a) design as a strategic tenet in improving the way we live, work and play, and b) design as an agent of ethical, inclusive change by providing businesses, educators and government with the tools and processes needed to navigate 21st century life. We are dedicated to building the San Diego region's capacity and reputation as a global leader in community-driven and data-informed design and innovation. As DFA President, it is my privilege to with cross-sectional leaders to better understand our regional challenges and help identify avenues and resources

One such leader is Shawn Loescher. From the moment I met Shawn, it was clear to me that he is the rare combination of philosophical, strategic, and practical, and he is both grounded and bold on all fronts. This is incredibly important in 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership, because the rapid and consistent rate of technological, social, and economic change demands far more than the perennial skills traditionally needed by executive leadership. Yes, Shawn is a bona fide Chief Executive Officer who excels at the table stakes of good leadership, such as fiscal responsibility, strategic planning, and alignment, leading teams, improving outcomes, prioritizing resources, and ensuring equity and accountability. For proof of this, one need only look at the sustained credit ratings, financial reports, low staff and student attrition rates, improved learning scores, and innumerable project, school, and district strategic plans and outcome reports that have been generated under his leadership. More essential than this, however, Shawn possesses the ability to manage increasing levels of complexity and to navigate the corresponding ambiguity, all while being deeply connected to people, cultural and behavioral drivers, and research behind evolving paradigms.

Shawn's leadership through the pandemic is a notable example of this. I will characterize it in three important but non-exhaustive words: courage, connection, and communication.

**COURAGE:** With little or no warning, the last year and half sent the entire world into an unprecedented state of being on a multitude of levels. Consequently, leadership has shown itself to be the critical linchpin for organizations in an amplified way. While many leaders

waited and watched as they determined how to move forward in the uncharted territory of the pandemic, Shawn leaned into his CEO role with courage and little hesitation. Shawn has a keen ability to identify and operationalize opportunities when others are either too timid or blind to the possibilities. He defaults straight to empathy, values, gathers the team to help inventory needs, risks, parameters, and resources, and then drafts and executes a plan. Within a day of the regional shut down, Shawn and his team had a plan in place for his schools- a plan that put people and their physical and mental health at the center, but that provided a scaffolded and iterative path forward. He was undeterred by the barrage of fear and concerns that were prominent and inevitable, nor the cacophony of doubts and questions that accompanied each decision and corresponding action he made. Rather, he embraced the ambiguity and its risk and addressed the rapidly changing situation step by step, clear about what was being decided and why, and focused on his mandates as CEO – people, safety, learning, support. Shawn’s clear understanding of leadership at both the theoretical and practical levels could be seen clearly in each and all correspondence and actions.

CONNECTION: The way that Shawn made decisions then and makes decisions in general is deeply rooted in his extensive lived and learned experience. It is also, however, based on elements much more powerful and sustainable - connection, trust, and community. This is where I perceive Shawn as different and more advanced than many executive educators and leaders. Shawn knows and is connected to the community he leads, internally and as part of a broader ecosystem. He is a social systems builder. He sees and understands the diversity and similarities of his constituents because he prioritizes the time and effort it takes to do so. He builds and nurtures the relationships that allow for him to lead through large-scale change, albeit a pandemic or simply 21<sup>st</sup> century life. This means that if he calls upon staff to go above and beyond, they are willing to do so because he wouldn’t ask if it wasn’t necessary - and he will be right there in the trenches with them. It means he can pull together the necessary resources needed to keep school going when everything else shut down because needs are already known, and adaptable plans are already in place to meet those needs.

COMMUNICATION: Coupled with his courage and connection was one of Shawn’s superpowers - clear, consistent communication that is equal parts informative, supportive, and actionable. It is evident that Shawn understands the power of two-way communication to not only align organizations and communities, but to build those entities and make them strong. From thought provoking reflections to more directional correspondence, Shawn’s tireless commitment to open communication

This commitment is particularly notable when there is so much chaos via other communications channels, as has been more than norm than not during the pandemic and beyond. When uncertainty and doubt is rampant, information and clarity is imperative. Shawn’s ability to cut through the noise, acknowledge the humanness in any

situation, provide context and pertinent research, and carve out clear next steps and timelines for success is remarkable. It is also a critical component to the leadership that is required in today's environment, and it is not something that is achieved through natural or learned skills.

The title Superintendent of a school district has a powerful undertone to it – it is public facing and responsible for public education. Public means people as a whole, connoting equal and open access, inclusive representation, and evolving dialogue. With a renewed focus on the 'public' today, our understanding of democratic engagement and prioritization of social equity and inclusion is intersecting with shifting and diversifying demographics and increasing societal demands. In this climate, I am regularly inspired by Shawn's deep commitment to his research and reflective practice and being what he calls a "hope researcher." In his words, "hope not as a feeling or state of mind" but as a strategic framework made up of "goals, pathway, and agency." Evident is all he says and does - and how he prompts our community to reflect - Shawn believes in the power of public education, not just as a learning channel for core subjects, but as a powerful equalizer and platform to explore how we think, why we think what we think, how can we transfer thinking into action. I believe this is one of the many reasons Shawn is internationally recognized for his work and leadership within education. He is endlessly working to understand the data and science, history and culture, reasons and ramifications of the past, their manifestations in the present, and their role moving into the future. Moreover, he engages with his staff, students, and community to research and reflect alongside him to inspire dialogue, informed decision-making, and, above all, action towards innovative progress. On a more personal level, Shawn openly shares the experiences that shape his paradigm and invites others to do the same so that the "public" is not a generalized concept, but rather a mosaic of individuals with both shared and idiosyncratic experiences. It is beyond inspiring. It is effective and necessary to invoke the sustainable change and impact needed in our education system and graduates of that system.

It is also one of the many reasons why the Design Forward Alliance has partnered with Shawn and Urban Discovery Schools for the ambitious task of becoming World Design Capital 2024.

The World Design Capital® designation is given every two years to a city that exemplifies the use of design towards social, environmental, economic, and political growth, development, and improvement of citizens' lives. In 2020, the Design Forward Alliance spearheaded an effort to make San Diego-Tijuana the first bi-national World Design Capital (WDC) region. Selected as a finalist against Moscow and, subsequently, as the official World Design Capital 2024, we are that, plus the first US city ever to co-receive the prestigious honor. The WDC has been a dream of mine for years, and one of the first people I engaged in dialogue around the initiative was Shawn. In many ways, this initiative represents who Shawn is, what he stands for, and how he sees our region and its students and residents.

Our WDC theme is HOME, representing the comfort the ideas and memories of ‘home’ suggests, all the complex issues ‘home’ unearths (e.g., homelessness, social injustice, climate action, immigration, poverty), and an acronym of our regional design DNA: Human-centered, Open, Multi-disciplinary/ Multi-cultural, and Experimental. It is a through line from history to the future. It is about people and policy, reflection and action, inspiration, and impact. It is about having the courage to pave a new path that is grounded in and informed by history, but bold about what can be accomplished alongside our community of constituents, and strong operations, and metrics. It is a Herculean version of what Shawn is doing every day in the classroom, in the district, and in our community. And it is why I asked Shawn to give the keynote at the first stop of our final assessment site visit - *Design as a Mode of Learning* forum that brought together binational educators from across the region, to include k-12, college-level, and lifelong learning. There was no one better to showcase the innovative approach and opportunities our region takes towards education, and what the future of education both holds and demands of each of us.

It has been a highlight of my tenure as DFA co-founder and now President to meet and work with Shawn. When I seek thought partnership and guidance, I seek it from him. I know that I will get compassion and candor, thought provocation and data. I know that he will push me to always hold myself to the highest of standards, to focus on people and service, and to push the boundaries of innovation with both the heart and the mind. This is who Shawn is. This is the leadership that he embodies every day. Quite frankly, as a parent of a child in public school, I insist that this is the kind of leadership needed at the helm of a public school district to bring current aspirations for our youth to fruition and to catapult our education system into the global model it can and should be. That said, I emphatically and unequivocally recommend Shawn Loescher for the next Superintendent of Washoe County School District.

Thank you and please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

In gratitude, service, and community,



Michèle Morris  
President  
Design Forward Alliance



## **Philosophical Statement: Knowledge and Beliefs on Leadership**

Washoe County Public Schools Superintendent Candidate  
Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D.

February 18, 2022

My leadership style is grounded in the philosophy of idealism which is guided by the principle that we are capable of creating a better tomorrow. With over two decades of progressive leadership roles domestically and abroad, I have a proven successful track record in transformational leadership in public education and non-profits. This journey started straight out of high school where I served as a classified classroom assistant which evolved into teaching, where I have experience at the primary, secondary and university level. I have had the great privilege of being a classroom teacher, learning community director, school site Principal, and systems leader at the district level. In a previous role I have served as a District Director and Program Principal for one of the largest school districts in the United States where I worked closely with members from the Board of Education on systems innovations and change models at 67 schools. I built on those executive experiences as an Executive Director/Chief of Staff for a school district and the Chief Executive Officer of a laboratory model public school system. In each of these roles my focus has been on systems development to do what is right to advance student achievement, close opportunity gaps, and actively engage in complex community issues.

Throughout my career I have utilized a visionary servant leadership model that puts what is right for our children at the heart of every decision. This has been balanced with my view that every leadership position is also one of stewardship. By this I mean that we are always building for those who will be next to serve in our office. These elements balance each other to keep my leadership focused on both the larger vision of what education can be and being sure that I recognize that I am but one part of a broader model that must be sustainable.

As a leader my core values or integrity, optimism, empathy, diversity, curiosity, community, innovation, equity, and impact. This value matrix keeps me focused on long-term objectives with the following guiding principles: my vision remains fixed on an ideal of what public education can and should be for our community; my mission remains steadfast as a children's and youth advocate; nevertheless, my strategies are loosely held and pliable to meet the purpose of the vision and mission. In this way I am vision and mission orientated; however, I am highly collaborative and welcome new ideas to advance student well-being and achievement.

To ensure that leadership is not a bottleneck for stakeholder engagement, I have utilized a diversified and diffused approach. By this I mean that while there must be a clear line of continuity from the classroom to the Office of the Superintendent, we must also have leadership development opportunities for our emergent leaders to shine and grow. This includes that our school and community leaders have forums to bring us together as their part of a clear social agenda to advance student achievement and well-being. Without having a student-centered goal in sight, we can lose focus of our purpose and obligation to be of service to their future. In this way, developing these stakeholders is part of the moral imperative and social contract to fulfil the promise of public education systems for our community.

It has been said that leadership is about doing right things whereas management is about doing things right. Where my leadership style intersects the two is by building a broader based vision that starts with our purpose, or why. By being highly visible and accessible I aim to make connections between public education agencies and the broader community. In this way we share a clear vision, create purpose, and promote the public good that our education systems represent. It is my goal that leadership inspires us to come together to achieve the highest levels of service, support, and outcomes for our students.

## **Philosophical Statement: Knowledge and Beliefs on Management**

Washoe County Public Schools Superintendent Candidate  
Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D.

February 18, 2022

Management is about creating systems to develop and execute plans to meet the broader vision of leadership through the establishment of systems, expectations, and performance goals. Management is a form of leadership that connects our daily tasks and positions to the broader good that we are part of. In this statement I aim to demonstrate some of the ways that I have developed management systems to support innovation and change to make significant progress on a vision and mission. This is not intended to be a statement of how I would approach things at WCPS, as each management system must be open and pliable to work through what is the most efficient and effective way to advance student achievement and systems performance.

As an experienced and credible executive, I have an extensive background in operations, including the development and implementation of policies and procedures. I have developed and implemented advanced human resource systems based upon growth models. My budgetary experience includes managing multiple restricted and unrestricted sources such as those with federal and state regulatory requirements. I have worked closely with financial teams to conduct monthly, quarterly, and annual reviews of budgets and published annual reports to increase transparency. My budgetary experience includes both programmatic and zero-based budgeting strategies to ensure that the mission of the organization is best being served. One of my organizational development strategies has been based upon building resilient cross functional teams of common purpose through collaborative structures to increase systems understandings.

Within my management structures I have utilized a human-centered design thinking approach. Design thinking is characterized by a cycle of continuous improvement that is based

upon collaboration, empathy, understanding, and growth. To serve this design I have utilized a balanced scorecard construct and approach to ecosystem design and development. In this model there is a balanced system between resource conditions, systems dynamics, innovation and growth, and community experience. This is key to managements' function to be responsive and pliable based upon achieving the vision and mission while receiving new and vital information and design parameters. I have aligned higher levels of this framework with strategic objective and key performance indicators that are then tied to the structures that support them. For example, resource conditions can be tied to strategic objectives (SO) such as (a) improved credit rating, (2) increased revenues sources, and (3) expedient revenue resources. Each of these might have key performance indicators such as SO3: annual revenue, supply demand gaps, line of credit/bond usage, and restricted resourcing support.

However, management is not simply about systems, it is about our people. It is our people that do the day-to-day work that advance our students and our community. To this end, to develop teams I believe that two primary principals must be at the forefront. These are (a) how do we promote diversity, equity, and inclusion from hiring to retention and promotion and (b) how to create a clear expectation that everyone is to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. These elements are critical to develop a cohesive broader team who have the courage to engage in system redesign, and in the process of adapting public education to the needs of the post pandemic realities that our students will encounter. To accomplish this, we must create models to move away from being risk adverse to ones where innovation is the normative way of being to advance student outcomes. In this way we lay a foundational framework of a team who represents our society and outlines the parameters of how we will conduct ourselves as we work towards a more ideal future as outlined in our collective vision for the organization.

## **Philosophical Statement: Knowledge and Beliefs on Education**

Washoe County Public Schools Superintendent Candidate  
Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D.

February 18, 2022

The public and their elected officials deserve a clear and concise statement about the educational philosophy of their Superintendent. To this end, here I will first utilize the language of philosophy to describe my position and then share what this means in terms of practical application. My purpose in doing so is so that the reviewing party and Board have a clear understanding of how these philosophical dispositions shape my beliefs about our world, our communities, student learning, curriculum, instruction, management, and leadership.

Within the four normative positions of educational philosophy, I am a reconstructivist. This is situated in an ontology of idealism, and epistemology of subjectivism, and a theoretical perspective of post modernism. So, what does this practically mean to the Board and the public at large? It means that I believe that the purpose of public education is to create the world as it ought to be and pay careful attention to the policies, systems, and practices that may perpetuate injustices. In other words, I believe that it is the duty of our public educational institutions to create a better tomorrow through an equity driven, student centered, and future orientated system that is developed by design and implemented with purpose.

This breaks down into some fundamental changes in driving forces in orientation of many educational institutions. For example, within this framework the leading force for curriculum becomes student interest, with essential questions that are socially grounded to tackle complex or wicked problems through reflexive cycles of inter and intra disciplinary curriculum. This means that students are to work through a process that has them working in practice on solutions for known or predictable outcomes through a cycle that leads to adaptive learning for

unknown solutions that are not clear or evident. Why this is important is that students must develop skill sets in our school of today to meet the needs of a future unknown.

The implications for the role of the various individuals who touch our students' lives are changed within this framework as well. For example, within reconstructivism we utilize a constructionist and design thinking perspective within the instructional process. This means that teachers move from distributors of knowledge to guides and mentors through a Socratic process that is based upon a matrix of learning theories that are bound within the broader framework of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Freire. Students move from an observer to the leaders of learning. The community moves from a traditional role of passive observer with limited input to a driver and champion of change for our students and our schools. Parents/guardians move from a role of being involved in homework, as a form of quality control checker, to that of a welcomed active participant in the development of our schools and classrooms.

This philosophical disposition demands that we take a long view and ask ourselves what the ideal desired outcome for our students and our society are. For our students the act of civic participation is always a desirable attribute. However, within a reconstructivist framework we seek a different level of civic engagement through an active effort to provide an educational process that is squarely grounded in a pedagogy of liberation to ensure that students have a full range of choices for their future. This means that our desired outcomes for society are enacted during the educational process as part of seeking out a more ideal future state through innovative thinking and inspired solutions orientation. This requires us to move past a desire to attempt to perfect previous education systems and focus on redesigning the educational experience with a focus that prepare students for their future—college and career ready.

## Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D.

### RECENT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Chief Executive Officer, Urban Discovery Schools (2017-Present)
- Faculty Associate, Arizona State University, Leadership, and Innovation (2020-Present)
- Executive Director, Alvord Unified School District (2014-17)
- Director, San Diego Unified School District (2009-14)
- Program Specialist, San Diego Unified School District (2007-09)
- Small Learning Community Director, School of the Arts at Madison High School (2004-07)

### OVERVIEW ATTRIBUTE AND COMPETENCY ALIGNMENT

- **Leadership:** Developed dynamic and resilient professional communities of practice to address complex/wicked problems within public education and the social sector.
- **Positive Influencer:** Experienced with complex social dynamics to develop, design, and influence political positions to achieve near, intermediate, and long-term goals.
- **Student Focused:** Led collaborative community-based reform initiatives to accelerate student achievement for college and career readiness. Developed and implemented academic changes in graduation expectations and requirements.
- **Results Orientation:** Increased institutional and instructional performance through the implementation of clear performance goals and actionable timelines.
- **Professionalism:** Seasoned professional with high expectations to provide sustaining leadership to multiple organizations, teams, school sites, and central office staff.
- **Relationship Builder:** Catalyst of community to bring together people, corporations, foundations, community leaders, government and non-government agencies, and educational leaders to advance innovations with far reaching influence.
- **Collaborator:** Garnered new synergistic business, educational, and community partnerships to advance student achievement and opportunity through dynamic collaborative structures.
- **Community Builder:** Creative problem-solving capabilities to build resilient professional learning communities of common vision with a positive and proactive focus on end results.
- **Service Orientation:** Practitioner of servant leadership stylings who seeks to have each position of the organization be of service to students and the community.
- **Listening Skills:** Inclusive moderator and active listener to develop a collective understanding and engage in opportunities for improvement.
- **Equitable Systems Builder:** Equitably aligned resources to organizational purpose for systemic, scalable, and sustainable solutions for organizational results.
- **Steward of Public Trust:** Served as chief representative of public agencies in community meetings, in the media, and in testimony before legislative bodies to develop public trust as a steward of public education.



## **HIGHLIGHTS OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **Student Achievement and Success**

- Leader of school redesign initiatives that improved graduation rates by >10% points.
- Reversed negative standardized test trends and created action plans to improve student achievement to exceed one year of growth per-annual cycle.
- Developed rapid response plans for student well-being and achievement that were featured in international publications for their results.

### **Improved Post-Secondary Outcomes**

- Revised course of study to implement post-secondary ready graduation requirements.
- Developed an articulated career technical education division for free credits at college and technical schools to prepare students for success beyond high school.
- Developed and implanted T/K-12 college and career readiness framework to improve post-secondary orientation and dispositions for future success.

### **Strategic Planning and Performance**

- Executed a balanced framework organizational strategic plan for fiscal stability and accountability that held a Standards and Poor's outlook of stable during the pandemic.
- Developed multi-year budgets and implemented fiscal controls to ensure economic solvency and funding of the organizational academic, operations, and strategic priorities.
- Organized, supported, and implemented the District Strategic Plan, associated committees, and corresponding actions that increased student opportunity and advanced achievement.

### **Total Systems Improvement and Innovation**

- International recognition and awarded educational change agent and social scientist with a focus on systems improvement based upon equity and democratic engagement.
- Charged as an enterprise systems architect for reorganizations, special projects, and committees to create effective structures and teams.
- Utilized design thinking and other appropriate improvement strategies to advance business operations, pedagogical practice, student learning outcomes, and community experience.

### **Program and Service Development**

- Redeveloped a T/K-12 course of study on the principles of culturally responsive curriculum.
- Developed collaborative service delivery methods, designed, and developed effective teams and organizational structures for cross divisional efficiencies for school improvements.
- Developed curriculum, programs, and services that produced synergistic partnerships to advance technology and resources for students, faculty, and staff.

### **Community Involvement**

- Garnered additional institutional resources to support educational innovations through grants, donations, and business partnerships.
- Developed and implemented new cultural norms and expectations for a collective learning community that focused on care, respect, positive goal setting, and belief structures.
- Created and implemented systems to improve community involvement at the school and district level to align to a strategic communications plan and cascading goals.

## **The Executive Summary Résumé of Shawn T. Loescher, Ed.D., WCSD Superintendent**

### **Culture of Inclusion and Equity**

- Maintained a focus on equity and cultural proficiency in all programs and activities through explicit goals, professional development, and redesign initiatives.
- Practitioner of cultural proficiency, restorative practices, and trauma informed care.
- Led educator pipeline initiative to address systemic gaps between desired diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and hiring disparities.

### **RELEVANT EDUCATION, CREDENTIALS, AND CERTIFICATIONS**

- Ed.D., Leadership and Innovation, Arizona State University
- Level I-III, Educational Supervision, University of California at San Diego
- M.S., Educational Administration, with Honors, National University
- B.A., Performance, Magna Cum-Laude, Berklee College of Music
- California Department of Education, Administrative Services Credential, Clear
- CITI Certifications: Social & Behavioral Research, Indigenous Persons Research.

### **LANGUAGAGE FLUENCY**

Primary language fluency is in English. Additional languages are currently out of practice.

### **HONORS** (*Abbreviated Listing*)

- TED-Ed Innovative Educator, one of 16 Worldwide Awardees.
- AERA, Action Research SIG Dissertation of the Year.
- Administrator of the Year, Region 18, California School Boards Association.
- Commander's Award for Public Service, United States Department of the Army.

### **RELEVANT GRANTS OBTAINED AND ADMINISTERED** (*Abbreviated Listing*)

- Design Thinking Incubation Center, The Girard Foundation, \$180,000.
- Adult Education Block Grant, California Department of Education, \$150,000.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning, U.S. Department of Education, \$500,000.
- Hire-a-Youth, U.S. Department of Education, \$200,000.
- PID Facilities Round 3, California Department of Education, \$22,000,000.

### **RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS** (*Abbreviated Listing*)

- Loescher, S. T. (2020). From risk-averse to risk immersed: Leading schools through a paradigm-shattering event (Part 1 of 3: Supporting the transformation of school teams). *Silver Lining for Education, Conversations About the Future of Education*.
- Loescher, S. T. (2019, July). *Embrace ambiguity! Why predictive metrics aren't helping*. A TED-Ed Innovative Educators TED Talk at the TED Summit, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. Available at: <https://youtu.be/qlBf2CQmeT0>
- Loescher, S. T. (2018). *Hope as strategy: The effectiveness of an innovation of the mind*. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University.