

Rebecca Feiden

Rebecca Feiden



Gennie Hudson
Agency Human Resource Services
400 West King Street, Suite 406
Carson City, NV 89703

December 11, 2018

Subject: SPCSA Director

I am writing to express my interest in the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director of the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA). As a current employee of the Nevada Department of Education, I was made aware of this opening through conversations with colleagues.

Two and a half years ago, I moved to Nevada to contribute to the improvement of the state's education system. Since then, I have come to intimately understand our state's educational landscape and the nuances of charter school authorizing in Nevada. It is with a commitment to ensuring that every Nevada child has access to great education that I seek to serve as the Executive Director of the State Public Charter School Authority. Below are highlights of the skills and experience that I bring to this position:

Experience establishing and managing a charter school sponsor in Nevada: I have spent the last two and half years establishing the Nevada Achievement School District (ASD), most recently as the Acting Executive Director. In my role, I oversee and execute all facets of charter school sponsoring. This includes the full spectrum of responsibilities, from reviewing charter applications to developing authorizing policies to conducting site visits and weekly compliance monitoring of schools. Through this work I have become fluent with Nevada's education laws, regulations and policies. For example, as a member of the Technical Advisory Group, which provides input on the Nevada School Performance Framework, I have developed a detailed understanding of how star ratings are calculated.

Transparent and consistent communication: The responsibility of charter school sponsors to provide oversight and accountability is critical to charter school effectiveness. At the same time, it is incumbent upon sponsors to provide transparency and clear communication so that schools understand what is expected and how success will be measured. In my current role, I send a weekly email to the Nevada ASD schools highlighting upcoming deadlines, training opportunities and updates from the Nevada Department of Education. I regularly coordinate with my colleagues at the Nevada Department of Education to ensure that the Nevada ASD schools have current information and are up to date with submissions. Clear communication is also critical to building trust with external stakeholders. I have had success engaging with a broad range of stakeholders from parents and community members to elected officials and have honed my ability to develop clear and concise messaging and materials.

Perspective as a former charter school teacher and leader: Prior to my role at the Nevada ASD, I served as the Managing Director of Operations for a charter management organization and oversaw a range of compliance and reporting responsibilities. This experience working in charter schools has allowed me to see the implications of decisions and policies from multiple vantage points. My perspective as a former teacher and charter school leader, coupled with my experience authorizing charter schools in Nevada, makes me uniquely positioned to create policies and practices that will best serve Nevada's schools and students.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to learning more about this opportunity and discussing how my skills align with the vision and needs for the State Public Charter School Authority.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Feiden

Rebecca Feiden

EXPERIENCE

Nevada Achievement School District, Nevada Department of Education

Las Vegas, NV

Acting Executive Director/Previously Director

2016-Present

- Oversaw successful launch of first four schools in the Nevada ASD portfolio, resulting in the addition of over 1,500 seats in communities with chronically low-performing schools. At full scale, these schools will serve 2,600 students.
- Established foundational school oversight practices in accordance with statutes and regulations including pre-opening process, school performance framework, intervention protocol and closure procedure.
- Oversaw the regulation process for regulation R108-15 which passed in December of 2017 and adds protections for students, empowers parents through the establishment of a parent petition process, creates performance compacts as a pathway to honor effective local interventions and protects capital investments.
- Crafted and executed communications strategy to shape narrative of the office including press releases and journalist interviews and resulting in coverage in four local and two national publications.
- Recruited and managed charter application review panels of seven or more subject matter experts to support the annual charter application review process resulting in a total of four approved applicants during the 2017 and 2018 application cycles.
- Actively engaged elected officials to report on the progress and challenges of the Nevada ASD, including one-on-one meetings with eight state legislators and presenting to the State Board of Education over ten times.
- Developed and published more than 20 resources aligned to the parent petition process with input from over 40 parent and community stakeholders.
- Built comprehensive Nevada ASD reporting calendar, compiled supporting resources on an Operator Support Website and established a system to communicate and track submissions.
- Reached 500 families at over 60 events across Clark County in the first year of the Nevada ASD through execution of strategic community engagement plan focused on gathering input and sharing initial information about the Nevada ASD.

Scholar Academies

Philadelphia, PA

Managing Director of Operations

2014-2016

- Led team of six to increase network-wide operations by 20 percent in a one-year period including expansion of infrastructure and systems improvements in technology, information management and human resources.
- Published 125 operations resources in six months to enable opening a new Scholar Academies school in a new region.
- Designed and led professional development program for six school-based operations leaders focused on building skills and developing action plans resulting in increased average daily attendance, reduced truancy and improved data accuracy.
- Led strategic design and implementation of new Human Resources Information system serving 250 employees and achieving 100% accuracy of employee benefits enrollment.

Young Scholars Frederick Douglass Charter School

Philadelphia, PA

Director Of Operations/Chief Of Staff

2012-2014

- Increased parent attendance to report card conferences by ten percentage points through strategically engaging families as partners in their students' learning.
- Led team of three operations coordinators to improve and systematize customer service, inventory management, technology, enrollment, and attendance resulting in increase in student attendance, decrease in truancy, increase in student retention and improved satisfaction with customer service measured through staff and parent survey.
- Implemented new student information system and developed workflows and auditing procedures to ensure accuracy with state reporting for approximately 750 students and 70 teachers across nine grade levels.
- Launched school lunch and breakfast program serving approximately 1,000 meals daily and funded solely on reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Young Scholars Frederick Douglass Charter School

Philadelphia, PA

Teacher/Instructional Coach

2011-2012

- Taught 6th and 7th grade mathematics to approximately 40 students, improving student performance on Pennsylvania State Math Assessment by one performance-level for 42% of students and two-performance levels for 13% of students on a four point scale. Overall proficiency of students increased from 0% on the prior year assessment to 25% on 2012 assessment.
- Observed teachers, reviewed lesson plans and provided targeted coaching to reach student achievement goals.

School District Of Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA

Teacher/Member Of Student Performance Data Team

2008-2011

- Taught 9th grade science and 11th grade mathematics, approximately 130 students per year resulting in at least 80 percent mastery of on grade level standards in all classes through data-driven planning and instruction.
- Analyzed school-wide attendance, standardized test and enrollment data with Student Performance Data Team to set goals and develop plans for improving student academic achievement.
- Directed data collection and assessment for purposes of accreditation by the Middle States Commission.

Teach For America

Philadelphia, PA

- School Director: Served as the Teach For America instructional leader for approximately 100 new teachers per year; Managed school operations and professional development of Teach For America Staff and new Teachers. (Summers 2011 and 2012)
- Corps Member Advisor: Coached and mentored 12 new teachers in lesson planning, lesson execution, classroom management and making data informed decisions in the classroom. (Summer 2010)

EDUCATION**University Of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education**

Philadelphia, PA

- Teaching Certification Program

May 2010

Wesleyan University

Middletown, CT

Bachelors of Arts – Majors: Mathematics, Physics

May 2008

- High Honors in Mathematics

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**National Association of Charter School Authorizers – Leaders Program**

2018

- Learned about national best practices in charter school authorizing and honed leadership skills through rigorous eight-month program that included seminars and one-on-one coaching.
- One of twelve individuals selected from a national pool of applicants to participate in this program.

Kickstart School Restart Cohort

2016-2017

- Increased understanding of national best practices in school transformations through eight-month program that included communities of practices, presentations from national experts and direct coaching and support.

CERTIFICATIONS AND COMPUTER SKILLS

- Pennsylvania Level 1 Instructional Certificate in Mathematics grades 7 – 12; Certificate in Science – Physics grades 7 – 12 (both inactive)
- Microsoft Suite (Advanced Excel Skills)
- Introductory level knowledge and skills in several computer programming languages: Visual Basic for Applications (VBA); JavaScript; HTML; CSS

References

- **Adam Johnson**, Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus (Authorized by the Nevada Achievement School District)
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
- **Colin Seale**, Charter School Association of Nevada
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
- **Steve Canavero**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
- **Brett Barley**, Former Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement, Nevada Department of Education
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
- **Jana Wilcox Lavin**, Former colleague at Nevada Achievement School District, Nevada Department of Education
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]

Professional Reference

Applicant's Name:

Rebecca Feiden

Reference Name:

Steve Canavero

Professional relationship to applicant:

Former Supervisor

Applicant's title while in your employ (if applicable):

ED Achievement School District

Dates of employment (if applicable) or how long you have known the applicant:

2.5 years

Applicant's reason for leaving (if applicable):

N/A

Would you rehire (if applicable), and if no, please explain:

Absolutely without any question.

Describe the applicant's quality/quantity of work:

Rebecca consistently produces high quality work. As State Superintendent I would frequently ask Rebecca to provide "last mile" edits/graphics/narrative to work that she was not professionally responsible for because her work is of such high quality. Any work that she was directly responsible for was never questioned and used as exemplars for others to follow.

Describe the applicant's interpersonal skills:

Rebecca's interpersonal skills are excellent. Rebecca operates in an environment that can be highly contentious and she navigated the decisions and work with grace and respect. I have not fielded a complaint about Rebecca and frequently receive positive feedback about Rebecca. She is well liked and respected by her colleagues.

Describe the applicant's leadership skills:

Rebecca's leadership is one area that I have seen grow over the last 3 years. She has evolved into what I would term a "servant leader" where she is in service to the mission behind the work. In this way, she is not focused on transactions but clear-eyed and laser focused on what needs to be accomplished in order to achieve improved outcomes for students. She is highly skilled in this area and will likely not characterize herself as such. This is good - her sense of humility is healthy and endears a strong sense of "followership" among others.

Additional comments you would like to share:

She is an ideal choice to lead the SPCSA! Trusted, respected, known. All at a time when the SPCSA is going through some rough seas. Rebecca will work night and day to get the work on track.

Professional Reference

Applicant's Name:

Rebecca Feiden

Reference Name:

Colin Seale

Professional relationship to applicant:

Frequent Collaborator

Applicant's title while in your employ (if applicable):

Director of Achievement School District

Dates of employment (if applicable) or how long you have known the applicant:

2-3 years

Applicant's reason for leaving (if applicable):

N/A

Would you rehire (if applicable), and if no, please explain:

N/A

Describe the applicant's quality/quantity of work:

Rebecca is the definition of a professional. Always extremely well-prepared, extremely focused, and extremely resilient, even in the most challenging of situations. Her written work and strategic management skills are second to none, and she has a rare knack for being able to sift through complex policy and political issues with very straightforward explanations and solutions.

Describe the applicant's interpersonal skills:

Rebecca is exceptional at working with difficult people and having difficult conversations. She is always extremely tactful in all of her interpersonal communications, and has a consistently positive demeanor that makes it very easy to connect with others.

Describe the applicant's leadership skills:

Rebecca is a highly effective leadership who consistently shows grace under fire. She is not afraid to have the tough conversations, make the tough decision, or make a tough shift in strategic direction when it is the mission-aligned thing to do.

Additional comments you would like to share:

The SPCSA is a complex organization with a broad scope of responsibilities. Rebecca's biggest strengths as an applicant is her vast inside knowledge of Nevada education statutes, regulations, and policies and strong relationships with influential stakeholders.

Applicant's Name:

Rebecca Feiden

Reference Name:

Adam Johnson

Professional Relationship to Applicant:

Rebecca and I have worked as colleagues for the past four years. First during my time at Teacher For America and more closely and recently during my time at Democracy Prep and her time as the Deputy Director and Interim Executive Director of the Achievement School District (ASD.)

Applicant's title while in your employ:

N/A

Dates of Employment or how long have you know the applicant:

I have worked with Rebecca for approximately four (4) years.

Applicant's reason for leaving:

N/A

Would you rehire, and if no, please explain:

N/A

Describe the applicant's quality/quantity of work:

As a former leadership team member at Teach For America-Las Vegas Valley and now Executive Director at Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus, I have encountered numerous leaders who seek to gain accelerated career trajectory by simply performing at their highest potential for "high stakes" projects. Unlike those individuals, Rebecca has sustainable work ethic and clarity re: her professional purpose in the field of education. She has the unique experience of working as a classroom teacher for multiple years and as a policy leader at a fast paced complex work environment at the Nevada Department of Education. In every work encounter I have had with Rebecca, she not only meets expectations for quality and quantity standards, she consistently exceeds expectations. For example, Rebecca was charged with creating an Annual Report for schools within the Achievement School District while concurrently monitoring school compliance and preparing for a legislative session. Rebecca was able to deliver an impactful and informative document on-time while continuing a high level of support for the four school leaders who she regularly supports.

Describe the applicant's interpersonal skills:

Rebecca's ability to personally connect with school leaders, administrative staff, and education stakeholders has enabled her to build a level of trust that allows her to make a much stronger impact on her community. For example, the Achievement School District was initially met with uncertainty and resistance. Rebecca worked across a variety of stakeholders to help share critical information about the ASD and how it would partner with children, families and communities to help increase educational outcomes. Rebecca's diligence and relationship building has created a better understanding of the ASD across the community and led to future pathways for growth for the entity.

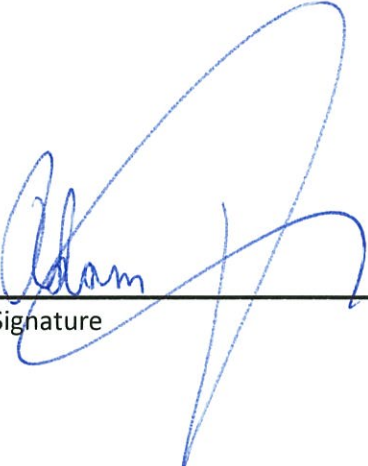
Describe the applicant's leadership skills:

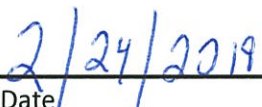
Leadership means setting a bold vision, inspiring others to follow that vision, and engaging in continuous learning and growth. Rebecca has displayed these qualities throughout her time as my colleague. One of the

qualities that outshines the rest is Rebecca's aptitude for learning quickly and applying learnings from both successes and challenges in the workplace. Her ability to seek, absorb and adapt feedback has enabled her to derive innovate solutions to complex challenges posed to her by the various schools which she oversees.

Additional comments you would like to share:

Rebecca has spent her entire professional career serving students in low income communities. It is the passion to both serve those traditionally underserved and ensure academic excellence (for all children) that drives Rebecca to commit herself to continuous learning and growth. Hiring Rebecca as the Executive Director of the State Public School Authority would enable Rebecca to further the tremendous work she does for our state's students and families. Rebecca's successes as a teacher and administrator are only the tip of the iceberg of Rebecca's leadership.


Signature


Date

Professional Reference

Applicant's Name: Rebecca Feiden

Reference Name: Brett Barley

Professional relationship to applicant: Former Supervisor

Applicant's title while in your employ (if applicable):

Director, Achievement School District

Dates of employment (if applicable) or how long you have known the applicant:

I've known Rebecca since 2016.

Applicant's reason for leaving (if applicable):

NA

Would you rehire (if applicable), and if no, please explain:

I would absolutely rehire Rebecca. She's one of the most thoughtful and hard working people I've ever had the pleasure to work with. Not only does she care deeply about providing all students with a great education but she is highly competent, takes initiative, and has diverse set of skills any organization could benefit from.

Describe the applicant's quality/quantity of work:

See attachment.

Describe the applicant's interpersonal skills:

See attachment.

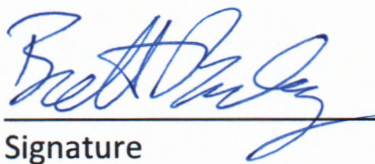
Describe the applicant's leadership skills:

See attachment.

Additional comments you would like to share:

See attachment.

Please attach additional pages if needed



Signature

1.22.19
Date

Describe the applicant's quality/quantity of work:

Rebecca's ability to produce high quality work in a short time span is second to none. She is proactive in staying ahead of deadlines and produces work that needs little, if any, correction. Rebecca is a quick learner and is also willing to teach herself new skills. This allows her to step in to a myriad of different situations and be successful. For example, I've seen Rebecca create family friendly presentations that outline laws or processes in a manner that is accessible to families as well as more detailed presentations for new or aspiring school principals that show how compliance or regulatory requirements work. Rebecca is transparent and asks for advice when needed but is also able to work independently and deliver fully developed projects on time.

Describe the applicant's interpersonal skills:

Rebecca takes the time necessary to get to know people and all sides of an issue. She is authentic and is willing to change her mind if presented with a solution better than the one she originally envisioned. Her willingness to listen and collaborate provides her with well-deserved credibility. Within the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) Rebecca had a reputation as a problem solver and someone willing to roll up her sleeves to support whatever work needed to be done. Rebecca also dedicated time to hear from the community while also mastering important technical issues. This allowed her to be successful in almost any engagement she participated in. For example, Rebecca was adept at transitioning from very technical conversations about the Nevada School Performance Framework and into conversations with families about how to support students in school. In both settings she was able to communicate effectively with her audience, make her points, and add value to the conversation. In short, Rebecca understands the value of building relationships and can then utilize those relationships to build support for initiatives she was leading. Rebecca is comfortable wearing many hats and as her supervisor I was confident that in whatever setting she was in she would represent the Nevada Department of Education well.

Describe the applicant's leadership skills:

Rebecca is organized, knows how to track a project's progress, and can keep a team invested in achieving its goals. She also understands how to lead in situations where she did not have direct authority over team members. In those situations, people followed her because she articulated thoughtful positions, demonstrated a willingness to collaborate, and volunteered to do the hard work.

Additional comments you would like to share:

It is hard to find leaders with the deep command of the issues, growth mindset, and humility that Rebecca has. I was honored to work with her and give her my highest endorsement. Any organization would be fortunate to have Rebecca as its leader.

Professional Reference

Applicant's Name:

Rebecca Feiden

Reference Name:

Jana Wilcox Lavin

Professional relationship to applicant:

Former Colleague

Applicant's title while in your employ (if applicable):

Deputy Director

Dates of employment (if applicable) or how long you have known the applicant:

7/2016 – 2/2017

Applicant's reason for leaving (if applicable):

N/A

Would you rehire (if applicable), and if no, please explain:

Yes. First and foremost, Rebecca is kids first in a way that is deeply tied to her personal and her professional work. Rebecca has a unique ability to both strategically plan and then implement that strategic plan. Rebecca is reliable; she is humble and has capacity to execute at a level beyond what I have seen from any other person I have worked with. Rebecca was a consistent partner to me. I relied on Rebecca to push my thinking, to see problems from multiple vantage points and turn solutions on their head in order to ensure every solution is kid focused.

Describe the applicant's quality/quantity of work:

Rebecca's ability to produce is un-paralleled. She can take an idea, conceptualize it and turn it into a final product that is useful and engaging.

Describe the applicant's interpersonal skills:

Rebecca is a strong listener. She hears all sides of an argument, rigorously explores the options to push for consensus. She is a strong manager and cares both about people's feelings and their outcomes.

Describe the applicant's leadership skills:

Sets a strong vision. Consistently links back to vision mid-strategy and execution.

Additional comments you would like to share:

Rebecca is an asset to any organization. She brings a thoughtfulness and deep commitment to any problem/opportunity that she is faced with. She quickly earns the respect of her fellow colleagues and partners, because her decision making approach is tied to equity and accountability for all kids.