

Special Called Meeting

March 13, 2025 6:00 PM

MCBOE

1. Director of Schools Interviews

1. Dr. Amie Lonas

2. Dr. Justin Perry

2. Interim Director of Schools Contract

Amie W. Lonas, Ed.D.

18620 Gracie Lee Street
Spring Hill, TN 34610
Phone: (865) 806-0933
Email: acwlonas@gmail.com

20 February 2023

Charles Cagle, Counsel to Marshall Co. Board of Education
Lewis Thomason, P.C.
424 Church Street, Suite 2500
Nashville, TN 37219

Dear Mr. Cagle,

I enthusiastically submit my application to compete for the Marshall County Director of Schools position. It would be an honor to be considered for this critical role within the district and I look forward to participating in the selection process. As a **life-long educator**, I am extremely vested in the education community and feel my experiences as an **academic administrator** exceed the responsibilities and qualifications required for the position. My interest in the position resides in my desire to return to a leadership role at the secondary level in my home state of Tennessee. I grew up in East Tennessee (Rhea County) and served as Director of Schools in neighboring Franklin County before returning to serve our nation in professional military education. Marshall County Schools has a long tradition of academic and extracurricular excellence, and I would enjoy being a part of continuing this tradition.

After graduating from UT Knoxville in 1993, I began my career in education as a **classroom teacher** at the secondary level (6th – 8th grades) where I taught technology by integrating the curricula through interdisciplinary projects. When I received my **Doctor of Education Leadership from Vanderbilt University** (May 2005), I immediately moved into **academic administration** as a building level **principal**. Over the past 19 years, I have successfully served at the district level as a **director of schools**, and in higher-education administration positions as both a **dean** and now **provost**. This progression of administrative and management experience has fully prepared me to serve as the Marshall County Director of Schools.

Please consider the following examples from my work experience addressing the **qualifications and duties of the Marshall County Director of Schools** position:

1. General Administrative

When I completed my doctorate in 2005, I moved into school administration, serving 5 years as a building level administrator. During my tenure, I managed all aspects of the school's program to include curriculum and instruction, student admissions, accreditation, standardized testing, athletics (including Title 9 requirements), and student discipline.

As a director of schools, I was responsible for implementing and overseeing local, state, and federal academic requirements in grades pre-K through 12. I worked closely with the local community college and colleges of applied technology to ensure our high school students were able to participate in dual enrollment programs and receive early admissions. I maintained, reviewed, and implemented over 280 board policies (on behalf of the eight school board members) that covered the areas of board operations, fiscal management, support services, instructional services, personnel, and students. Policies were reviewed annually, and revisions made as needed based on changes to state and federal laws.

In each of my administrative roles, I have been responsible for creating and evaluating the organization's strategic plans, working closely with the institutional effectiveness team to provide both qualitative and quantitative measurements. The data were used to implement quality improvement strategies across the organization, resulting in increases in academic performance, student enrollment, employee morale, and job satisfaction.

2. Financial Management

Throughout my academic administration career, I managed operations (both fiscal and physical) at all levels. As a building level principal, I oversaw a budget of \$270,000 and a facility that supported a student body of 700 students. As a director of schools, I managed a district budget in excess of \$43M that included local, state, and federal funding resources. I presented a balanced budget to the county commissioners during my tenure, ensuring the state's requirements for reserve funds were met. Currently, I manage a budget of \$16M that primarily funds contracted faculty and staff support requirements beyond the day-to-day operational budget.

As a director of schools, I managed all operational aspects for a school system that included eleven school sites (totaling 1,031,329 square feet located on over 320 acres), 365 certified staff members and 434 support staff members, and an enrollment of 5,699 students in grades Pre-K through 12. While serving as the director of schools, I initiated a building program to refurbish and expand two middle school facilities with a total cost of \$48M. I worked with the county mayor to present a bond issue proposal to the county commission to fund the project.

3. Personnel Administration

I have supervised a variety of employees to include both certified and non-certified personnel. While serving as a director of schools, I reorganized the central office staff and reallocated many of the centralized responsibilities to the building level principals to implement site-based management strategies throughout the system.

In 2019, JSOU received Title 10 hiring authority that broadens the scope of faculty talent for the university. Under this authority, I chaired the hiring panels and onboarded 12 new faculty members over the past two years. As the senior civilian, I manage and approve all civilian hiring actions within the organization and work closely with mid-level supervisors to address performance expectations and issues.

4. Instructional Leadership

I am very fortunate to have a unique career progression, teaching and leading at both the secondary and higher education levels. I began my teaching career in 1993 as a middle school teacher, teaching technology in a computer lab setting. While this is commonplace in today's instructional environment, it was not then. We were one of the first school districts to utilize technology to integrate the curricula through interdisciplinary projects.

As a classroom teacher, I assumed responsibility for additional duties, serving several years on the school's regional accreditation committee with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) and representing my peers on the local education association board during the collective bargaining process each year.

In 2000, I joined the United States Air Force and served as a traditional guardsman in the Tennessee Air National Guard. As a result of my academic credentials and military experience, I was selected as the Faculty Development Director for the Joint Special Operations University in 2010 where I taught and mentored the JSOU faculty on classroom instructional techniques at the post-secondary level.

5. Community/Public Relations

Throughout my career, I have been involved in my community through civic and religious organizations. While serving as a director of schools, I served on the local hospital board, supported the chamber of commerce events, and was a member of several civic organizations. I also provided a weekly session on the local radio station to disseminate information and answer questions from the community.

I have extensive experience establishing and working with non-profit, education foundations. While at JSOU, I created the JSOU Booster Club to serve as a non-profit support entity that funded social events and other requirements that could not be funded through government channels. I served as the President of the booster club for two years. In 2017, I initiated and drafted the charter to establish the Franklin County Educational Foundation for Excellence. The foundation currently provides funds and resources that directly support Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) efforts across the district.

In closing, I thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Additional information is provided in my curriculum vitae and should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me by phone (865) 806-0933 or by email (acwlonas@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Amie W. Lonas

Amie W. Lonas, Ed.D.

Dr. Amie Wilder Lonas
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Spring Hill, Florida 34610
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Education:

Ed.D., Education Leadership, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 05/2005
M.S., Curriculum and Instruction, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 05/1992
B.S., Elementary Education, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, TN, 05/1990

Professional Experience:

Provost

01/2022 – Present

Joint Special Operations University, MacDill AFB, Tampa, Florida

Supervisor: Dr. Paul Brister, JSOU President

Status: GS-1701-15; Full-Time

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) serves as the educational component of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), providing the highest quality Joint SOF leadership education possible at both the operational and strategic levels. JSOU delivers formal professional military education (PME) courses to the Special Operation Forces (SOF) enterprise (Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Air Force Commandos, Marine Raiders). As part of the University's executive leadership team, the primary purpose of the provost is to serve as the JSOU President's principal advisor on the academic affairs of the University, including programs, faculty, curriculum, students, advisory boards, scholarship, accreditation, funding, institutional effectiveness, and academic support. The provost is the chief academic officer and senior supervisory professor overseeing all vice provosts, deans, and department heads. Key accomplishments include the following:

- Currently implementing and supervising the development of a new faculty talent line authority. JSOU received the authority to hire Title 10, Administratively Determined (AD) faculty in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). However, due to administrative hurdles with the USSOCOM headquarters, we were initially unable to exercise the authority. I worked closely with the personnel, legal, and resourcing departments to establish hiring policies/practices and socialize them with the appropriate points of contact throughout the headquarters. Serving as chair of the civilian hiring panel, we have successfully onboarded twelve Title 10 academic faculty since 2021.
- Upon arrival at JSOU in 2020, I was responsible for leading and implementing a comprehensive organizational change initiative called JSOU NEXT. The initiative required my team to complete a comprehensive curriculum review and refit study. The study identified areas where we needed to develop new curricula based on emerging national security priorities. We designed and developed content for a Joint/Combined-Special Operations Forces (JC-SOF) Common Core to be delivered in multiple modalities (to include online modules). I also led the reorganization of the University's structure and personnel to fully implement the JSOU President's vision for the JSOU NEXT initiative.

Dean of Faculty and Academic Affairs
Joint Special Operations University, MacDill AFB, Tampa, Florida
Supervisor: Col Scott Guilbeault, US Air Force, Vice President
Status: GS-1701-14; Full-Time

07/2020 – 01/2022

The primary purpose of this position was to serve as the university's first-level supervisor for the planning, directing, organizing, and exercising control over all faculty and academic development, educational programs, accreditation, admissions, student services, institutional technology, and site security management. Key accomplishments included the following:

- Shortly after arriving, I assumed responsibility as the lead to plan, organize, and direct the JSOU Senior Leadership Team to develop and present a series of In Progress Reviews (IPRs) for JSOU NEXT. Within a very short timeframe, created the framework for three decision briefs that resulted in the JSOU President's approval for implementation in CY21.
- In conjunction with leading the JSOU NEXT concept development team, authored the *JSOU Strategic Plan 2021-2026* that was used to track progress with JSOU NEXT implementation taskers.
- Working closely with the Faculty Advisory Board and the department directors, developed a faculty rank and performance management structure that fully implemented the JSOU President's vision to redefine faculty responsibilities for Teaching and Learning, Research and Analysis, and Service and Outreach.

Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs (DFAP)
National Defense University, Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia
Supervisor: Major General (Retired) Lewis (Lew) Irwin, US Army Reserve, Commandant
Status: AD-1701-06; Full-Time

07/2017 – 07/2020

The National Defense University (NDU) is a regionally accredited, institution of higher education funded by the United States Department of Defense, intended to facilitate graduate level education and the development of national security strategy. NDU is composed of five colleges, each with a distinct focus that provides uniquely valuable education and leader professional development opportunities. The Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) is one of five colleges and is responsible for educating national security professionals to plan and execute operational-level joint, multinational, and interagency operations to instill a primary commitment to joint, multinational, and interagency teamwork, attitudes, and perspectives. As the Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs, I served as the executive head of the faculty and as chief academic officer. I was responsible for the content and quality of the college's curricula, to include the currency, relevancy, and pedagogical innovation of two Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) Phase II programs, one of which awarded a master's degree. I chaired the Academic Review Board that oversaw the implementation of academic standards for both regional accreditation with Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and Department of Defense's Joint Staff/J7 content requirements. Key accomplishments included the following:

- Supported the Commandant, JFSC and Director, Joint Staff/J7 in designing a concept for joint force development that would involve a reorganization and refocus of both J7 and JFSC current capabilities. The concept was being developed in conjunction with the *JCS 2030 Vision for PME and Talent Management* and the *CJCSI 1801.01E, National Defense University Policy*. Both initiatives were directed to support and operationalize recently issued national

strategy and specifically, the *National Military Strategy* and the *Joint Staff's Capstone Concept for Joint Operations 2030*.

- Tasked by the NDU Provost to coordinate a university-wide Deans' Performance Management Working Group focused on developing faculty evaluation standards in the areas of Teaching, Research, Engagement, Service and Workplace Accountability. My efforts resulted in an NDU-wide initiative, detailing the requirements for faculty in each of the five areas by academic rank and supported the establishment of a compensation and reward structure based on these requirements.
- Developed lesson plans and taught instructional methodology and education theory during JFSC's faculty orientation program held four times each academic year.
- Within my first six months at JFSC, I revised the academic review policy and instituted new documentation requirements to meet accreditation. I worked closely with our experts in institutional effectiveness to create rubrics to collect direct assessment data that better aligned with accreditation standards to accurately measure the "student experience."
- I worked closely with the university leadership as they reviewed and revised the NDU strategic plan. Beginning in December 2017, we established working groups within the college to develop our own strategic plan. The plan was signed in Jun 2018 and covered a period of 5 years. Within the plan, I encouraged the development of a council governance structure to promote faculty and staff participation.

Director of Schools

07/2015 – 06/2017

Franklin County School District, Winchester, Tennessee

Supervisors: Franklin County School Board Members

Status: Full-Time

As the Director of Schools, I was responsible for all aspects of the school district. I supervised seven department heads responsible for curriculum and instruction, finance, personnel, technology, transportation, maintenance, food services, standardized assessment, federal programs, and board policies. I maintained, reviewed, and implemented over 280 board policies that covered the areas of board operations, fiscal management, support services, instructional services, personnel, and students. Policies were reviewed annually, and revisions made as needed based on changes to state and federal laws. I oversaw eleven school sites (totaling 1,031,329 square feet located on over 320 acres), 365 certified staff members and 434 support staff members. Our enrollment was 5,699 students in grades Pre-K through 12. 57% of our students were identified as economically-disadvantaged and 16% of our student body were served through special education services. I managed a budget of \$43.6 Million that was derived from local, state, and federal funds. Our district also had several federal and state grants that fell under my responsibility. I was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the state department's teacher and administrator evaluation framework, the state's standardized assessment program (TNReady) and the dissemination of data to schools and teachers through our student growth model called Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). Tennessee was one of the first states to implement a growth model for accountability. Key accomplishments include the following:

- At the end of my first year, I reorganized the central office staff and responsibilities that constituted a cost savings to the district of over \$300,000. Many of the centralized responsibilities were reallocated to the building level principals to implement site-based management strategies throughout the district.

- I expanded the initial implementation of the 1 to 1 initiative to provide every student with an electronic device (Chromebook). The initial implementation was projected to take six years. I redesigned the program funding and timeline to be completed in four years.
- During my first year as Director of Schools, I initiated a building program for the two middle schools that was projected to cost approximately \$41M. I worked with local businesses and industries to fund the initial purchase of land for the project at a cost of \$1.326M.
- I initiated the development of a Franklin County Schools Foundation as a non-profit that provides monetary mini grants for individual schools and teachers. The initial board meeting occurred in November 2016 and the Foundation currently supports STEM projects and enrichment opportunities throughout the district.
- Within the first year of taking office (2016-17), I developed and executed a balanced budget that had not been previously accomplished in the district. The budget provided all employees with a 2% raise, the first raise in several years. We met the state's requirement for appropriate levels in our reserve funds and we were able to provide funding to the fine arts programs that had previously been cut from the general-purpose budget.

Dean of Academics

06/2012 to 06/2015

Joint Special Operations University, MacDill AFB (Tampa), Florida

Supervisor: Dr. Brian A. Maher, SES, President (Retired)

Status: GS-1750-14; Full-Time

Served as the Dean of Academics for the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). I was responsible for a staff that performed academic oversight and support for JSOU courses, faculty, students, technology, security, and facilities. I was responsible for implementing and maintaining academic standards to ensure university and program accreditation with the Department of Education. I chaired the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) process that oversaw course development through all phases of the Instructional Systems Design (ISD) process. Programmed and planned the department and university's budget in excess of \$16M. Participated in education focused meetings at all levels to include director, component, and senior staff levels. Briefed the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Commander and Vice Commander on new education initiatives for JSOU. Key accomplishments include the following:

- In 2014-15, I developed and briefed USSOCOM Headquarters' (HQ's) senior staff on a new JSOU initiative entitled, *JSOU 3.0: The Way Ahead*. For the initiative, I proposed and oversaw the design of a master's certificate and a bachelor's completion program in Advanced Special Operations – the first of its kind. For the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) FY14 and FY15, I wrote legislative proposals that would allow JSOU to obtain Title 10 faculty hiring and degree granting authority. Coordinated among multiple offices, including the U.S. Department of Education (ED), three ED accrediting agencies, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)), Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict (ASD (SO/LIC)), and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Program, to ensure proper authorities and avenues for implementation of JSOU 3.0 existed.
- During my tenure, I expanded the distance learning program to include an online presence for all JSOU courses. Designed and developed the first fully online course for JSOU, *Introduction to Special Operations ISOF*. Worked closely with the budget analyst, HQ's contracting office, and the Learning Management System representative to ensure ongoing availability (an increase from 500 to 4000 user licenses) and expanded capabilities to include mobile device features.

- Within six months of assuming responsibility for the Instructional Technology Department, I reorganized the IT staff and its processes to increase customer satisfaction rates. Focus was placed on proactive customer service, response times, and documentation of service requests. As a result, turnaround time for a request was decreased from 72 hours to 48 hours and agility to respond increased overall customer satisfaction from a low of 2.71 on capabilities and a 2.74 on processes to over a 4.0 on both (faculty survey; based on a 5-point scale). Contracted and oversaw the development of new SharePoint portal-based programs to include an operations schedule, JSOU public portal, guest speaker tracking tool, and student registration.

Director of Faculty Development

07/2010 to 05/2012

Joint Special Operations University, MacDill AFB (Tampa), Florida

Supervisor: Dr. Brian A. Maher, SES, President (Retired)

Status: GS-1712-13; Full-Time

As the Director of Faculty Development, I was responsible for the professional development and training for all JSOU faculty members. JSOU is responsible for providing courses for over 70,000 special operations forces (SOF) and SOF enablers assigned throughout the US Special Operations Command, so the expertise and instructional skills of the faculty are a high priority for the university. I developed and implemented an 80-hour Methods of Instruction Course (MOIC) that was an initial requirement for all newly hired instructors and professors. Documented and tracked all professional development events attended by faculty and provided documentation to the university's accrediting agency. Key accomplishments include the following:

- As the first Director of Faculty Development for JSOU, I ensured a standardized process was developed and implemented to document faculty education and training. The processes were reviewed and approved by the accrediting agency, along with the methods to track successful completion of the agency's standards.
- Scheduled professional development events each quarter with local professors from civilian universities to improve teaching and instructional methods, student assessment, and active engagement of learners. Resulted in higher levels of course credit opportunities (upper baccalaureate and graduate levels) for students.
- In January 2012, at the request of the Polish Special Operations Command (POLSOFCOM), I taught a modified MOIC for POLSOFCOM instructors (the first of its kind) that would be providing educational courses on operational planning and irregular warfare focused topics to Polish Special Forces. Also co-taught a course to students at the Jagiellonian University (University of Krakow) in support of the JSOU program.

Public School Administrator

07/2005 to 06/2010

Jefferson County Schools, Dandridge, Tennessee

Supervisor: Dr. Charles Edmonds, Director of Schools (Deceased)

Status: Full-Time

I served as the Maury Middle School Principal, responsible for over 700 students and 60 staff and faculty members. I provided professional development, implemented annual teacher evaluation standards, and oversaw technology initiatives to ensure successful implementation of key state and federal education requirements. Responsible for implementing local board policy for daily school management and oversight. During this time, I also served the local community in the following capacities: board member for United Way, steering committee member for Jefferson County

Chamber of Commerce, chief negotiator for Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA), and county-wide family and community engagement coordinator. Key accomplishments include the following:

- Developed an online dynamic curriculum that allowed teachers to post and access locally developed materials. Teachers were able to share and utilize resources across all areas of the curriculum.
- Implemented the first of its kind automated contact system for parent and community engagement. Sent out bi-weekly messages through voice, text, and email.
- Worked with individual teachers to desegregate assessment data and review formative assessment throughout the school year. Used the data to make student placement decisions and provide remediation and enrichment opportunities.

Secondary School Teacher
Maryville City Schools, Maryville, TN and
Jefferson County Schools, Jefferson City, TN
Status: Full-Time

07/1993 – 06/2005

I began my education career at the secondary level, teaching technology to middle school students (7th and 8th grades) and overseeing the integration of technology through interdisciplinary projects. I established three computer labs and was responsible for acquiring new software capabilities for both student and faculty use. During my teaching tenure, I volunteered and/or was selected to serve in the following leadership roles: committee chairperson for the SACS CAIS accreditation review; chief negotiator for the local teacher education association; peer evaluator certified by the Tennessee State Department of Education; and co-author for the National Blue-Ribbon School application (awarded to Maryville Middle School in 1997).

Military Experience:

Force Support Officer (Traditional Guardsman)
Tennessee Air National Guard (TNANG), 134th Air Refueling Wing, McGhee Tyson ANGB
Supervisor: Lt Col (Ret.) Anthony Melson, TNANG, Chief of Staff
Status: Achieved the rank of Major at time of resignation with Honorable Discharge

04/2000 to 09/2009

As a Force Support Officer, I administered and conducted Total Force support operations across the wing and for tenant commands. Translated program policy into directives, publications, and training manuals. Participated in total force adaptive planning and execution in support of combatant commanders from peacetime through mobilization, contingency operations, and demobilization. Accessed manpower, personnel, and equipment availability for unit posturing and management. Developed, controlled, programmed, and allocated manpower resources in support of the Air Force planning, programming, budgeting, and execution process. Analyzed and determined force composition. Determined total force manpower requirements across the spectrum of Air Force capabilities.

Ministerial and Training Development Center Coordinator
Camp Phoenix, Baghdad, Iraq
Supervisor: LTG (Ret.) Frank Helmick, Former Commanding General, MNSTC-I

2008 to 2009

I served on the Ministerial and Training Development Center (MTDC) Advisory Team during a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Located in the International Zone (IZ) in

Baghdad, Iraq, I was responsible for advising the Iraqi Director of the MTDC on administrative matters to improve processes and efficiencies within the center. Working with coalition forces, I impacted over twenty different courses provided for key Iraqi leadership. Key accomplishments include the following:

- Developed curriculum and implemented the “first of its kind” Advisor School. The purpose of the school was to improve the capabilities of U.S. and coalition advisors to senior Iraqi government leaders. As a result of my efforts, I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service in May 2009.
- I was instrumental in pursuing several newly introduced value-added initiatives that further expanded the advisors’ capabilities and the Coalition’s reach and influence into Iraqi society to include the Advisor Standards Committee, Alumni Council, Partner School, Iraqi Women’s Leadership Conference, and English Language Training Program for Iraqis scheduled to attend U.S. schools.

Professional Development and Licensures:

Completed the *Aspen Institute Justice and Society Seminar*, Oct 2024

External member of the *Army War College Provost Search Committee*, Nov 2022 – Feb 2023

External member of the *National Defense University Provost Search Committee*, Dec 2021 – Feb 2022

Member of the *MSCHE Committee on Substantive Change*, Jan 2020 – Dec 2022

Completed *Middle States Commission on Higher Education Peer Evaluator Training*, Dec 2019

Served as *Temporary Faculty at Valdosta State University*, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dissertation Committee member, Feb 2017 – Dec 2020

Completed *Harvard Kennedy School Senior Executive Fellows Program*, Feb 2014

Completed *Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) Distance Learning Program*, Oct 2013

Completed *Squadron Officer School (SOS) Distance Learning Program*, May 2007

Completed *Services Initial Skills Course*, Air Force Institute of Technology, November 2006

Completed *Officer Commissioning Program*, Air National Guard Training and Education Center (TEC), April 2001

Currently hold a Tennessee State Department of Education *Professional Teaching License* and a *Professional Administrator's License* (effective until 2028)

Awards and Recognition:

Recognized by the NDU President and University Leadership with a *Special Act Award* for innovative support to the mission and leadership of the Deans’ Performance Management Working Group, Sep 2019

Member *JS/J7 Military Education Coordination Council Working Group*, Jul 2017 – Present

Awarded the *Herald Chronicle's 2017 Reader Survey "Franklin County's Finest Boss" Award*, Feb 2017

Member of *Southern Tennessee Regional Health System Board of Trustees*, Winchester, 2016 – 2017

Member of *Delta Kappa Gamma (Franklin County Chapter)*, 2016 – 2017

Member of *Franklin County Board of Health*, 2015 – 2017

Member of the *Winchester Rotary Club*, 2015 – 2017

Member of the *Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents*, 2015 – 2017

Member of the *American Association of School Administrators*, 2015 – 2017

Member, Board of Directors, *Franklin County Chamber of Commerce*, 2015 – 2017

Voting member of the *Franklin County Government Finance Committee*, 2015 – 2017

Member of the *Southern Tennessee Ladies Society Scholarship Foundation*, 2015 – 2017

Member of the *2015 Leadership Franklin County Class*, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce

Recognized by HQ U.S. Special Operations Command with the *Joint Civilian Service Commendation Award*, May 15, 2015

Military Education Coordination Council Working Group representative for JSOU, 2013 – 2015

Presenter for the *IDGA Special Operations Summit West*, Mar 2013

Member of the *2012 Leadership Tampa Class*, Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce

JSOU Representative for the *A&E Selection Board*, MILCON Working Group, Sep 2013

Recipient of the first ever Joint Special Operations University *Permanent Faculty Member of the Quarter Award*, March 2011

Awarded the *Bronze Star Medal* by the United States Armed Forces for meritorious service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), May 2009

Administrator of the Year, Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA), 2006 – 2007

Middle School Teacher of the Year, Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA), 2004 – 2005

Member of the *2004 Leadership Jefferson County Class*, Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce

(Served as a faculty member with the Leadership Class representing Education Day, 2005 – 2010)

Publications/Scholarship Highlights (Major Projects):

Dudas, D., Fidermutz, B., Lonas, A. (2022). What is JSOU? Then, Now, and Next. *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 105(2), 55-59. <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2999180/what-is-jsou-then-now-and-next/> (Co-author)

Joint Special Operations University Strategic Plan, 2021 – 2026 – Captured the JSOU NEXT initiative requirements for implementation at all levels of the university; reviewed and updated annually (Author and Editor)

Joint Forces Staff College Directive 1400.01 Faculty Handbook – Provided basis for newly developed faculty performance expectations in teaching, research/analysis, engagement, service and workplace accountability, effective AY 2019-20. (Contributor and Editor)

CJCSI 1800.01F, Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), 01 Apr 2020

Provided ongoing inputs and recommendations to update document to reflect an outcomes-based model for JPME II requirements. (Contributor)

Joint Forces Staff College Strategic Plan 2018-2023, 01 Jun 2018. (Co-author)

Franklin County Board of Education Policies: Board Operations; Fiscal Management; Support Services; Instructional Services; Personnel; and Students, 2015-2017 - Annual review and revision of 280 policies to ensure compliance with state and federal laws. (Author and Reviewer)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) AdvancED Engagement Review Report, September 2015 and September 2016. (Co-author)

Joint Special Operations University: Methods of Instruction Course (MOIC) – designed and developed 80-hour course; required attendance for all newly hired faculty; 2010-2013. (Author)

Key Elements of Comprehensive School Reform: A Comparative Case Study between the U.S.

Department of Education's Whole School Reform Framework and New Hope Middle School's Reform Process. Vanderbilt, Peabody College, Dissertation, May 2005.

Middle School Policy. Tennessee Department of Education, March 1999. (Co-author)

Blue Ribbon Proposal. Maryville Middle School, August 1996. (Co-author)

Final Report: Career Ladder Projects. Tennessee Department of Education, May 1992. (Author)

Long Range Educational Planning Guide. Document for Tennessee Department of Education, May 1992. (Author)

An Evaluation of the Impact of Local Needs Assessments on Tennessee's Incentive Program.

A Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA., April 1992. (Author)

Other:

U.S. Citizen

Currently hold a Top-Secret/SCI Security Clearance

References:

Mrs. Sara Liechty, Franklin County School Board member, 103 McKinney Circle, Estill Springs, TN, 37330, (931) 636-2721, liechtys@united.net

Dr. Shannon Meade, Vice Provost for Education Policy and Institutional Effectiveness, Joint Special Operations University, 7701 Tampa Point Blvd, MacDill AFB, FL 33621, (813) 826-3761, shannon.meade@socom.mil

Dr. Isaiah "Ike" Wilson, III, President Emeritus, Joint Special Operations University, 5845 Audubon Manor Blvd, Lithia, FL 33547, (845) 269-1741, isaiah.wilson3@gmail.com

(Additional references are available upon request.)

Joint Special Operations University (JSOU)
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Shannon.Meade@socom.mil

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

Mr. Charles W. Cagle, Counsel to the Marshall County Board of Education
Lewis Thomason, P.C.
424 Church Street, Suite 2500
Nashville, TN 37219

Dear Mr Cagle,

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Dr. Amie Lonas for the Director of Schools position for Marshall County.

Dr. Lonas and I have been colleagues off and on for 14 years. Initially she was my counterpart in another department here at JSOU only later to become my boss two different times and mentor always. I worked with Amie when she oversaw faculty development and later became her deputy when she was promoted to the Dean of Academic Affairs. As Dean, Dr Lonas led JSOU through a reaccreditation visit that resulted in JSOU receiving the highest score possible. Dr Lonas left JSOU to take on further challenges where she continued to excel. She was eventually enticed to return to JSOU as our Provost to help right the ship after JSOU experienced a tumultuous time of budgeting and leadership challenges. Amie stepped into the fray with no hesitation and led JSOU back to a position of respect and appreciation within the Special Operations community. Dr Lonas led JSOU by example and challenged all of us to refocus our efforts on supporting our primary customer. She established JSOU liaisons within the headquarters' directorates and reinvigorated a defunct SOF schoolhouse consortium to share best practices and pool resources.

I strongly recommend her, and I am quite confident that she will lead Marshall County's schools to new heights. I served 20+ years as an AF officer before joining JSOU and commanded at the squadron level. Yet, once I met Dr Lonas, I realized I still had much to learn about leadership and service. I am a better leader and educator for having worked with her.

Warm regards,



S.P. Meade, DPA, GS-14

Vice Provost for Education Policy and Institutional Advancement

Joint Special Operations University

Sara L. Liechty, Ed. S.

Franklin County, Tennessee School Board

District 8

931-636-2721(C)

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my sincere honor to recommend Dr. Amie Lonas as an educational leader candidate. Dr. Lonas served as the Director of Schools in Franklin County, Tennessee. As a School Board member in Franklin County, I was privileged to work with Dr. Lonas and to witness her wisdom, her knowledge, and her leadership skills. She was most successful as she worked to elevate the educational opportunities for all of our learners.

Dr. Lonas quickly established and maintained a positive and productive working relationship with all members of the School Board. This created an environment which supported open and productive dialogue among Board members and with Dr. Lonas. These discussions revolved around current facility needs, budget requirements, and cutting-edge programming.

Dr. Lonas immediately established a positive rapport within the community. Her regular presence in the school buildings along with her participation in various civic organizations and events provided the opportunity for the community stakeholders to know her. The community rapidly embraced her leadership style. Her knowledge, her professionalism, and her strong communication skills were reflected in the relationship that she was able to build and maintain. Dr. Lonas analyzed and prioritized the educational needs in the county. She then developed strategies to involve the community in understanding, in supporting, and in implementing plans to address these needs and to strengthen education. Her effectiveness as an educational leader must be highlighted as one evaluates her success in building unity and support within the community.

Dr. Lonas was not only a successful and appreciated school system leader when she served in Franklin County; she also spearheaded the creation of the Franklin County Educational Foundation for Excellence. What began as her concern for meeting the need to enrich and enhance opportunities for all of Franklin County's learners has grown into a viable source for enriched learning experiences throughout the County's schools. Because of Dr. Lonas' vision and through her leadership, the Franklin County Educational Foundation for Excellence 501(c)(3) has become a reality for all learners in Franklin County Schools. The impact of this organization has grown exponentially to provide a plethora of innovative and unique education

avenues for students and for teachers. A Franklin County Educational Foundation for Excellence Endowment Fund has been established and will provide for students and learning in the future. Dr. Lonas not only lead with passion during her tenure with Franklin County, she has, through her vision, ensured an avenue for excellence in learning for the future.

I believe that Dr. Amie Lonas has the requisite experience plus a broad base of education knowledge and would be most successful in a leadership position. Because of her commitment to learning and to the community in which she served, I know that she is extraordinary. She is remembered in Franklin County for her strengths, and her ability to move education forward. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Sara L. Liechty, Ed.S.

Sara L. Liechty, Ed. S.

School Board, District 8

Franklin County, Tennessee



Wilson W.i.S.E. Consulting LLC
Tampa, FL, and Washington DC

To the Selection Committee,

I am writing to offer my strongest unqualified endorsement of Dr. Amie W. Lonas.

I have known Amie for over five years, on both a professional and personal basis, having selected her through an extremely rigorous and highly competitive selection process to serve, initially, as Dean of Academic Affairs, and ultimately, as Provost – the #2 top senior leadership position – of the congressionally-mandated Joint Special Operations University, United States Special Operations Command. I have closely observed and supervised her performance as an academic and scholar, as a teacher, and as a senior executive-level leader and administrator. She ranks among the finest public servants, educators, and leaders I have known in my 40-year professional career as an educator and policy practitioner. I unhesitatingly recommend her for this important and impactful position.

While I have known *of* Dr. Lonas for many years, indirectly and by her stellar reputation as a seasoned education administrator, I first met her personally in late-2019 during interviews for Dean of JSOU, a key and essential leader position that had gone unfilled within the University for many months for lack of finding the best-fitted candidate for what was to become – at the directive of the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command – a major generational transformation of the JSOU in *forms, functions, and faces* (i.e., faculty and staff talent), aimed at servicing the global-wide special operations leader-operator communities in education, leader-operator preparation, and lifelong leader development as a unique, one-of-a-kind polytechnical university. Amie Lonas proved to be the unique perfect fit, and just as “one-of-a-kind” of a change leader, educator, and administrator as the University she has stalwartly led for the past four years of historic change in how the Nation prepares its special operators, as well as those of our Nation’s allies and foreign country partners.

Since arriving at JSOU in 2020, Dr. Lonas has been directly responsible for leading and implementing a comprehensive organizational change initiative called JSOU NEXT. The initiative required her team of faculty and staff to complete a comprehensive curriculum review and refit study—the first of its kind in scope, scale, and comprehensiveness since the University’s founding in the year 2000. The study additionally identified areas demanding wholly new curricula based on emerging national and global security priorities. Under her direct leadership and supervision, Amie’s team designed and developed content for a Joint/Combined- Special Operations Forces (JC-SOF) Common Core – the first of its kind – to be delivered in multiple modalities (to include online modules). Dr. Lonas also led the reorganization of the University’s structure and personnel to fully implement the JSOU President’s vision for the JSOU NEXT initiative.

During her time as JSOU Dean (July 2020 - Jan 2022) Amie immediately hit the ground running, and assumed responsibility as the lead to plan, organize, and direct the JSOU Senior Leadership Team to develop and present a series of In Progress Reviews (IPRs) for JSOU NEXT. Within a very short

timeframe, she created the framework for three decision briefs that resulted in the JSOU President's approval for implementation in CY21. In conjunction with leading the JSOU NEXT concept development team, Amie authored the *JSOU Strategic Plan 2021-2026* that is currently in its fourth year of its original five-year implementation plan. Working closely with the faculty and the department directors, she developed a faculty rank and performance management structure that fully implemented the JSOU President's vision to redefine faculty responsibilities for Teaching and Learning, Research and Analysis, and Service and Outreach.

Competing for and assuming the duties of Provost of the Joint Special Operations University in January of 2022, and serving in that position and capacity presently, Dr. Lonas is currently implementing and supervising the development of a new faculty talent line authority. JSOU received the authority to hire Title 10, Administratively Determined (AD) faculty in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). In this capacity, Dr. Lonas worked closely and tirelessly with the personnel, legal, and resourcing departments of multiple Command headquarters, peer Academic institutions, and Supporting agencies, to establish hiring policies/practices and socialize them with the appropriate points of contact throughout the USSOCOM headquarters. Serving as chair of the civilian hiring panel, the JSOU was able to onboard their first Title 10 academic faculty in 2021 (an historical milestone) and the University is now in the process of hiring their 12th faculty member under this authority.

The reform, refits, and reorganizations of the JSOU-NEXT Initiatives have proven nothing less than watershed; leading a renaissance in not only the content and context of SOF education, but in the structure and andragogy of SOF leader-operator (as well as commanders and staffs) training and preparation—*vital changes coming at vital time in US Department of Defense (DOD) strategic and global security change*. Dr. Lonas has proven herself overmatching in her vitalness in leading this change. It was a pleasure working and leading with her through these endeavors, and I would seek out opportunity to work and serve with her again.

Please feel free to contact me at (845) 269-1741 or via email at isaiah.wilson3@gmail.com for further information. Amie has my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,



Isaiah (Ike) Wilson III, Ph.D.

President Emeritus

Joint Special Operations University (JSOU)

Justin Douglas Perry
2053 Keene Circle
Spring Hill, TN 37174
931-637-7122

Marshall County Board of Education
700 Jones Circle
Lewisburg, TN 37091

Dear Members of the School Board,

It is with great pleasure that I submit my application for the Director of Schools position in Marshall County. In addition to being from Marshall County and being an alumnus of Marshall County High School, I have spent my entire professional education career in Marshall County. I have taught at the Alternative Learning Center as well as at MCHS. I spent two years as Assistant Principal at Forrest School before returning to Marshall County High School as Principal. This is my 6th year in school administration.

I can honestly say that since being employed as an educator in Marshall County, I have never applied for a teaching or administrative job outside of this county because this is the only place my wife, Sara (14th year teaching in Marshall County), and I want to work. When I interviewed for the Principal position at MCHS in 2021, the first question I was asked was why I wanted to be the Principal at Marshall County High School. I vividly remember answering without hesitation—I got a wonderful education at MCHS that set me up for great success in college and beyond, and I wanted that same opportunity for all of our students today.

I am applying that same passion and desire for excellence now in my application and interest in the Director of Schools position. The Marshall County School System is a wonderful place for students, families, and educators. We have strong principals, accomplished teachers, and schools that simply do amazing work with students on a daily basis. I would love to have the opportunity to improve upon the work we have already been doing as well as lead our county into a new era of academic achievement and growth; facilities and extracurricular programs and activities that all Marshall County citizens can be proud of; and relevant academic programming that meets the needs of our local economy as well as prepares students for the jobs and economies of tomorrow.

I believe you will find in my application package strong evidence of being a successful administrator and someone who has the ability to bring out the best in both adults and students. I am confident that my vision for Marshall County Schools aligns with the vision of the School Board. Please feel free to contact me at 931-637-7122 or jperry1870@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Justin Perry, Ed.D.

Justin Douglas Perry, Ed.D.

2053 Keene Circle, Spring Hill, TN 37174 | 931-637-7122 | jperry1870@gmail.com |

Summary Statement

A passionate and accomplished educational leader with 12 years in education (6 in leadership) that is seeking the Director of Schools position for Marshall County. Recognized for being a strong instructional leader, using performance data to make student-driven decisions, building strong relationships with stakeholders of all types in the school and community setting, and fostering a culture of belonging and positivity in the school setting. Known as a consistent, clear, and effective communicator as well as a great listener and collaborator. Possesses a forward-thinking mentality which allows for strategic planning and actionable goal setting; strong collaboration and support for teachers and students to positively impact student achievement; and an unwavering commitment to improved performance and student achievement.

EDUCATION

Lipscomb University Nashville, TN

Doctor of Education – Learning Organizations and Strategic Change, 2021

Lipscomb University Nashville, TN

Education Specialist – Educational Leadership, 2019

Middle Tennessee State University Murfreesboro, TN

Masters of Education – Curriculum and Instruction, 2013

University of Memphis Memphis, TN

Bachelor of Arts – History (Cum Laude), 2012

CERTIFICATIONS

Tennessee ILL-P Professional Administrator Pre-K-12

History 7-12

Government 7-12

Economics 7-12

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

TDOE Principal Academy, 2024

TDOE Rural Principal Network, 2022-2023

TDOE Assistant Principal Academy, 2020-2021

Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance, 2017-2019

- Inaugural cohort member; multi-county, competitive selection process; Principal Pipeline Partnership between Lipscomb University and TDOE.

ADMINISTRATION EXPERIENCE

2021-Present: Principal, Marshall County High School (Lewisburg, TN)

Student Demographics: W 60%, H 21%, BL/AA 17%; Free/Reduced 70%

- Managed daily operations of the building, including personnel, the physical plant, and budgeting.
- Administrative facilitator all seven Professional Learning Communities.
- Evaluated faculty and classified staff.
- Implemented effective student discipline strategies to enhance overall school climate, culture, and safety.
- Collaborated with students, parents, and families to develop comprehensive post-high school plans.
- Built and cultivated relationships with local businesses, community leaders, and other key stakeholders to support student success and school initiatives.
- Organized and implemented the ACT Bootcamp every semester in preparation for the school-day ACT.
- Focused on continued and sustained improvement in the school's climate and culture, primarily through the growth of the Jostens Renaissance program.
- Built the school's master schedule every year in collaboration with the school counselors and other administrators.
- Met bi-weekly with the school's Leadership Team to plan and discuss upcoming school events or initiatives;

brainstorm and solve problems; monitor trends with Chronic Absenteeism, Truancy, and discipline referrals; examine RTI data and student performance; discuss accomplishments or things to publicize and highlight via the local newspaper and social media; and work collaboratively on a variety of school issues and areas of needed improvement.

Further details on the highlights, accomplishments, and improvements at MCHS during my tenure as principal are provided on a subsequent page.

2019-2021: Assistant Principal, Forrest School (Chapel Hill, TN)

Student Demographics: W 87%, H 9%, BL/AA <5%; Free/Reduced 33.6%

- Served as the Building Testing Coordinator for TCAP/EOC as well as ACT.
- Managed student discipline and parental engagement for middle school grades (7-8).
- Administrative facilitator for all science and social studies Professional Learning Communities (7-12).
- Evaluated teachers.
- Led staff professional development for ACT and Tennessee Academic Standards curriculum alignment.
- Supported the principal in school operations, staff management, and positive behavior incentives for students.
- Assisted teachers with engaging students and parents during the hybrid/virtual learning year of 2020-2021 during the COVID pandemic.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2018-2019: Graduation Coach and Building Testing Coordinator, Marshall County High School (Lewisburg, TN)

- Worked with teachers, school counselors, and administrators to identify and support students who were credit deficient or otherwise at risk of dropping out of high school.
- Developed a monitoring system that used a variety of data points to determine students in each grade who were most at risk for dropping out of school.
- Organized and led the school-wide fundraiser, which provided funds for each class's graduation, senior-year activities, and regalia/awards.
- Engaged in monthly professional development and networking with other school and district leaders in southern middle Tennessee through an informal "data collaborative" that looked at ways leaders could use data to make student-driven decisions from the organizational level to the classroom level.
- Assistant football coach.

2015-2018: Economics/History Teacher, Marshall County High School (Lewisburg, TN)

- Lead Teacher for technology, 2017-2018.
- PLC facilitator, 2017-2018.
- Piloted the school's 1:1 "student to device" laptop program, 2016-2017.
- Led multiple district-wide in-services concerning integrating technology into curriculum and instruction.
- Assistant football coach (Region 4-4A Assistant Coach of the Year, 2017).

2013-2015: Alternative Learning Center, Lewisburg Middle School (Lewisburg, TN)

- Taught multiple classes and subject areas from grades 7-12.
- Coordinator for the A Plus and Odysseyware online learning platforms.
- Assistant football coach.
- Assistant tennis coach.

PUBLICATIONS

2021: An Examination of Tuacahn High School for the Arts' ACT Preparation Program (Doctoral dissertation)

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS/TRAININGS

2024: Safe Schools in 2024 (TOSS/ALI Assistant Principal Network event)

KEY SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

- **Instructional Leadership**
- **Strategic Planning**
- **Academic Programming**
- **Budget Management/Resource Allocation**
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
- **Relationship Building**
- **Effective & Clear Communication**
- **Collaborative Work**
- **Discernment**
- **Situational Awareness**
- **Ability to make challenging decisions**
- **Active listener**
- **Proven ability to improve academic performance**

MCHS Highlights, Accomplishments, and Improvements

All of these items have occurred during my tenure as principal of MCHS unless otherwise noted.

Academic Programming

- Added multiple Advanced Placement/State Dual Credit programs.
 - AP Psychology
 - AP Art 2-D
 - SDC Psychology (MCHS led the state in the challenge exam pass rate in 2023-2024.)
 - SDC Introduction to Education
- Worked closely with the CTE Director (Frank Musgrave) to add back the Agriscience program and begin the Dual Enrollment Office Management program at MCHS.
- Restarted our Musical Theatre program--a collaborative, fine-arts effort that incorporates our Choir teacher and our Theatre teacher.
- During the 2024-2025 school year, students with a strong interest in pursuing STEM fields after high school have had the opportunity to work after school with Ph.D. students from Vanderbilt University to conduct original research on topics related to biology and other scientific areas of study.
- All of these academic programming improvements have occurred without any increase in the number of yearly budgeted teachers for MCHS.

Instructional Leadership

- Revamped PLCs at MCHS to allow for more time spent in classrooms informally and giving teachers actionable feedback to improve instruction.
- Made meaningful and time-consuming commitments to build capacity in teachers to examine their own student performance data and be able to use that data in their classrooms to make student-driven decisions.
- Made master schedule decisions and assignments based on student needs and teacher effectiveness (including student performance data and TVAAS growth measures).
- Prioritized working with new or struggling teachers via PLCs, informal walk-throughs, and TEAM observations to increase the overall level of support and coaching for these teachers.
- Consistently responded to changes in state and federal accountability models.
 - Developed a targeted intervention plan for students in the bottom 33% of TVAAS projections to ensure that they have more time and support in small-group settings.
 - Improved two letter grades ("D" to "B") on the new state accountability Report Card from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024.
- MCHS was 5th (out of over 30 schools) in the South Central region for ACT Composite student average in 2022.
- MCHS has consistently had the highest ACT Composite student average in South Central when comparing schools of similar demographic profiles (Ex.—Shelbyville Central, Columbia Central, Mt. Pleasant, Giles County, and Fayetteville High School).

Culture and Climate

- Continued to grow and improve the Jostens Renaissance program.
 - MCHS was recognized as a Platinum Level School of Distinction the past two years, the highest recognition in the Renaissance program due to our continued growth and sustained commitment to recognizing and rewarding students for their achievements and improvements.
- Total yearly Discipline Incidents (write-ups) have dropped 31.7% in the past two years *and are on pace to drop significantly yet again this school year.*
- Worked to improve 9th grade engagement, discipline, and inclusivity by starting a Freshmen Preview Day in the summer the past two school years in order to better welcome incoming freshmen to MCHS.
- Across multiple years, teachers consistently say on the yearly anonymous surveys that I
 - Work hard.

- Have an open-door policy and try hard to listen and weigh all perspectives.
- Am very visible and very present (hallways, ball games, etc.).
- Work to improve various facets of the school (academic interventions, school safety, etc.).
- Build strong relationships with staff and students.

Staff Retention

- Drastically reduced staff turnover (*these numbers include retirements*).
 - 13 vacancies/new hires the summer before my 1st year as principal (2021-2022); 8 in 2022-2023; 7 in 2023-2024; 4 in 2024-2025.

Student Attendance

- Drastically improved Chronic Absenteeism rate from 2018-2019 (25.9%) to 2023-2024 (17.5%) even as, nationwide, Chronic Absenteeism has dramatically increased since the Covid pandemic.
 - During this same time period (2018-2024), MCHS has had the 10th best improvement in Chronic Absenteeism of any high school in the state of Tennessee. (I believe it is important to use 2018-2019 as a baseline since that was the last complete school year pre-Covid.)

Facility/Physical Plant Improvements

- Worked closely with Mr. Sorrells, the Maintenance Department, and outside contractors/vendors to
 - Redesign and sand the gym floor.
 - Design and install new gym bleachers.
 - Improve the public address/sound system in the gym and at Preston Hopkins Field.
 - Repaint the gym and select building hallways.
 - Repave and restripe the entire school parking lot.
 - Repaint the blue awnings around the school.
 - Install avenue banners on the light poles in the parking lot that showcase our school logo.
- All of these projects involved coordination, meetings, and budgeting with multiple parties, which reflect my commitment to having the best facilities and best facade we can possibly have while working with budget constraints.

Extracurricular Activities

- We work very hard at MCHS to have as many competent and qualified coaches on staff as possible and are always searching for teaching candidates who will help coach a sport(s) if possible. A few highlights of our sports teams over the last four years include
 - Reaching the Quarterfinals of the TSSAA State Football Playoffs in 2023 and 2024, including the first undefeated regular season this year since the 2000 season.
 - Our softball team advanced to the TSSAA Region Tournament for the first time in 10 years in 2022 and advanced to the Region Tournament again in 2024.
 - Our boys' basketball team has advanced to the TSSAA Region Tournament three straight years, and our girls' basketball team reached the Region Tournament in 2024.
 - One or both of our cross-country teams have reached the TSSAA State Championship Run every year the past four years.
 - Our bowling team had an undefeated regular season in 2023-2024.
 - Our wrestling program has gone from the brink of being cut to now having strong numbers and multiple State Tournament qualifiers the last two seasons.
- MCHS has long had a robust offering of clubs, but over the past four years we have added a History Club, which produces podcasts about Marshall County history; an American Sign Language club; a Drama club; a Dungeons and Dragons club; and a STEM club.

Teamwork and Team Leading

Shared Ownership and Established Teams

- When I was contemplating applying for the MCHS Principal job in 2021, one of the seemingly small, yet ultimately very important, factors that helped sway me to go ahead and go for the job was that there was an outstanding team in place at MCHS. What I mean by this is not simply a strong faculty, but a truly elite office, administrative, and counseling staff. I knew that as a young principal, I would need to lean on these people and let their expertise and experience not only help me learn but help guide some of my decision-making. Four years into this job, I am proud to say that I was proven completely correct about this. I attribute a great deal of the success we have had in a variety of areas over the last four years to a great office staff & Leadership Team. We have worked hard, efficiently, and collaboratively to identify areas that have needed improvement, strengths to leverage, and ways we can continue to improve the student experience at MCHS.
- One of the first things I did when I became principal at MCHS was to ask each office, administrative, and counseling staff member to provide a complete and thorough list of every single thing they did at MCHS. I did not ask for this list to try to upend everyone's job. Rather, I wanted to learn as much as I could about their roles and what I could do to support them in those roles. This also provided an education of sorts for me as to all the aspects of school beyond merely teaching in the classroom and being an assistant principal.
- As public education continues to evolve and our school & community population continue to change, it truly takes a team to identify emerging trends, new problems, and bold solutions to respond appropriately. As principal, this has been a primary function and purpose of our Leadership Team PLC (*discussed earlier in resume*).
- I have often told aspiring administrators that perhaps the one phrase that encapsulates the entire job as a building principal is that you are the "CFOO"...the Chief Figure Out Officer. It is ultimately on the principal's shoulders to get the right people on the team and build capacity in them to execute the principal's goals, mission, and vision for the school. While there are of course areas we still need to improve upon, I am confident that this approach has helped us be successful and build a great deal of positive momentum at MCHS over the last four years.
- I wholeheartedly believe that as Director of Schools, I would be entering a very similar situation as what I have described above about becoming and being the MCHS Principal. There is a strong, experienced, and established Central Office staff already in place. This is going to be ideal for a young superintendent to enter into. I have no doubt that I will have a lot to learn about leading the entire organization, but I am confident that there are great people in place who not only are deeply invested in Marshall County students and schools but will also work hard for me and with me to help me with the learning curve. As I grow into the role and gain confidence in the job, it will then be easier to identify areas in different schools or districtwide that we need to improve upon.

Collaboration and Relationships Across the District

- One of the best career decisions I have made was to apply for and accept the Assistant Principal job at Forrest. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and working with Ms. Phifer and the entire Forrest faculty and staff. I still tell people that had the MCHS Principal job not opened up when it did, I would probably still be at Forrest.
- Being at Forrest was a great opportunity for me to, while still being in Marshall County, gain a different

perspective on education with a vastly different student population and a different community. Not only did I have a great experience at Forrest, but it truly made me a better, more capable leader when I became the MCHS Principal. As many of you know, my sister and my brother-in-law work in Chapel Hill schools, which has continued to provide me with insight and knowledge into school issues or matters on the north end of the county.

- One of the aspects of the Chapel Hill community that I found so admirable and have tried to apply in Lewisburg and at MCHS is the “vertical alignment” of the three Chapel Hill schools. Obviously, a lot of this can be attributed to the close-knit nature of the Chapel Hill community, but it was great to see how closely Ms. Phifer, Mr. Reasonover, and Mrs. Kirby would work sometimes on matters that affected the entire school ecosystem and/or community in Chapel Hill, whether that be Homecoming, student visits between the schools, or high schoolers being allowed to go into the elementary schools to mentor and read to students. (One thing that I have implemented at MCHS that was a direct result of my time at Forrest is a Senior Walk, in which our graduating seniors visit each elementary school to walk the halls one last time and present certificates of thanks and appreciation to teachers. This has become one of the best, most-anticipated events each year and has been a great PR “win” for our Lewisburg schools.)
- In addition to working closely with Ms. Phifer for many years as the Forrest Assistant Principal and now as MCHS Principal, I have also developed a great working relationship with Mr. Adcox at Cornersville School. The three of us work very well together, we are close personally, and we share ideas with each other and are always willing and able to help each other think through problems and ways to approve various situations. We have very productive Secondary Principal PLC meetings, along with Mrs. Zajac, the LMS Principal and a former MCHS colleague, and truly make a great secondary team. Yes, we all want to be the best and are competitive by nature, but all of us understand that when we each can win, we all win as a district and school system.
- It’s no secret that one of the challenges of running and managing our school district is that we are essentially three mini-districts in one. I am quite confident that, while I’m sure there will be other qualified applicants for the Director of Schools position, the School Board will not find an applicant who is more capable, qualified, and ready to work with stakeholders across this county and in each school community than me. I pride myself on building and maintaining great relationships with people, and I know that I can apply these principles and traits across Marshall County.

February 19, 2025

Marshall County Board of Education
700 Jones Circle
Lewisburg, Tennessee

To Whom It May Concern:

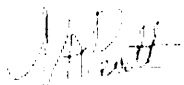
This letter is to recommend that Justin Perry be considered for the Director of Schools for the Marshall County School System. As a teacher and administrator in the school system for 37 years, I have observed Justin as an outstanding teacher, assistant principal, and principal. He has a winning personality and conducts himself with dignity as he performs his daily duties. Justin is honest, dependable, and efficient; and always demonstrates kindness and understanding during his interaction with others.

As the Assistant Principal of Forrest School and the Principal of Marshall County High School, Justin has used his skills and training to develop and communicate a vision for the school system. Given the opportunity, he will provide high-quality leadership to best serve the children, parents and community. He will be diligent to recruit and retain educators and leaders who are dedicated to quality education and who demonstrate a sincere love and commitment to the students.

Justin's education and experience will be an excellent foundation for budgeting and building maintenance; as well as, developing a cordial working relationship with the Board, the supervisors and administrators, the teachers and parents. His skills in research and evaluation will ensure that the school system is providing educational programs and assessment skills that build a strong foundation for the early learning students as well as ensuring that the middle school and high school students are prepared for the variety of future education and careers. Justin is dedicated to a quality education for all students of the system.

Justin has made continued progress in his professional career and made a conscious effort for excellence throughout his career. His knowledge and experience will serve as stepping stones to make him an exceptional leader of the Marshall County School System. I highly recommend Justin for the position and am confident that he will be an excellent leader if he is given the opportunity.

Sincerely,



Nancy Allen Pruitt
Former Principal of Forrest School and Marshall County High School



February 20, 2025

Dear Marshall County Board of Education Members:

I am happy to be writing a letter of recommendation for Dr. Justin Perry for the position of Director of Marshall County Schools. I have had the pleasure of knowing Justin since he was a young man, and I have seen him develop into an extraordinary leader who I feel would be an outstanding Director for our district.

Justin has the unique experience of having worked in several roles within our system. He has been a classroom teacher, taught at our Alternative School, served as Graduation Coach and Testing Coordinator at MCHS, served as Assistant Principal at Forrest, and is currently serving as Principal at MCHS. Having these varied experiences has given him the opportunity to see and learn from different perspectives as to how schools operate. A successful Director must be able to relate to all aspects of the school system, and I believe Justin has the knowledge to perform this job successfully.

I have had the chance to work with Justin in his various roles – especially as principal. I have joined in on many of his leadership PLC's at MCHS and have seen his management and supervisory skills in action. He has fostered respect and comradery within the faculty and has grown the positive attitude that I see at MCHS when I walk into that school building. It takes a strong leader to keep a faculty working together. Justin has been successful at this, and I know he can take these same skills and bring them to the role of Director. I see him being able to keep Marshall County Schools together on the right track toward improving and becoming one of the top districts in our South-Central division.

Dr. Perry is a hard worker who understands the business of Education. He is a strong academic leader who is a curriculum expert. He is knowledgeable on current trends in education as well as being up to date on laws in which districts must comply. Justin is an upstanding, trustworthy, and intelligent man who will do everything in his power to make Marshall County Schools the best they can be. He is vested in our community, and, as a Marshall County Schools alumnus, he will take pride in leading our schools into the future. In my experience of working with many administrators over the years in Marshall County Schools, I believe I can assess the qualities of a good leader. I know Dr. Justin Perry will meet and exceed those qualifications. I can wholeheartedly recommend him to you as our next Director of Schools.

Sincerely,

Ginger Tepedino, Supervisor
Student Services/Attendance
Marshall County Schools



Marshall County High School

661 WEST ELLINGTON PARKWAY
LEWISBURG, TENNESSEE 37091
TELEPHONE: 931-359-1549
FAX: 931-359-4784

Marshall County Board of Education
700 Jones Circle
Lewisburg, TN 37091

February 16, 2025

Marshall County Board Members,

As a 33-year employee of Marshall County Schools, I am delighted to recommend Dr. Justin Perry for Director of Marshall County Schools. I had the good fortune of teaching him in the eighth grade, then working with him as a fellow teacher, and now working with him as Principal of Marshall County High School.

Justin has always had Marshall County in his blood-from growing up in Lewisburg to returning after college graduation. As we are all aware, educators and leaders are in high demand. Justin and his wife, Sara, could have chosen anywhere to pursue careers and put down roots, but they intentionally chose to do so here with us!

And when he started, a position at the Alternative School was the only one available. Justin seized the opportunity to work with some of our most challenging students and then moved to the roles of regular classroom teacher, assistant principal, and now principal.

Besides being hard-working and diligent, Justin possesses other leadership skills that make him qualified to be Director. He listens without prejudging and does not overreact when presented with problems. I appreciate that any of us at MCHS can go into his office with ideas and not be met with an immediate "no." He thrives on learning! Justin doesn't assume he knows everything and challenges himself to know the latest technology to help our school, to know the best classroom teaching strategies, and to understand all aspects of the endless minefield of data. He challenges all of us to constantly get better as well.

When he became principal, Justin asked all of us in the office to submit to him our current duties. He genuinely wanted to know what our roles were and how he could best help us. Justin works well with all kinds of personalities; he understands the nuances of getting the best out of each member of the faculty and fosters a climate of belonging. When the state report card came out last year, MCHS was given a "D." While we knew our school was not a D, Justin pushed for improvement with strategies he had implemented, and this year's report card was a "B!"

Finally, one of the strongest traits of an effective leader is being able to make tough decisions, even when they might be unpopular. As a principal, Justin has had to make some tough decisions. He stands by his decisions and does not let angry parents or frustrated teachers keep him from doing what is right. As Director, I am sure there will be many times when those types of decisions must be made. In our world today, parents and community rarely have all the facts and simply lead with emotion. Justin already has proven his ability to navigate these difficult situations and persevere in seas of uncertainty.

In conclusion, Dr. Justin Perry has my enthusiastic recommendation to be the Director of Marshall County Schools. He has worked his way up to this leadership role. Justin possesses the qualities of an effective leader and his willingness to learn and grow make him the perfect candidate for Director.

If you have further questions, feel free to contact me at 931.993.0343.

Regards,



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