

Dr. Janice DeFrances

North Kingstown, RI 02852 | janicedefrances53@gmail.com

Special Education Director

Program Development / Educational Leadership / Relationship Management

Professional Summary:

- Passionate, results-driven educator leveraging 15+ years' multifaceted expertise in education, healthcare, human service, and child welfare settings and proven success working with diverse students from varying backgrounds.
- Track record for leading family- and child-focused programs that foster inclusivity through deliberate system change and school reform while providing hands-on guidance to faculty and staff to achieve optimal results.
- History of devising and executing innovative plans to secure external collaborations and donors to ensure program success.
- Deep experience creating streamlined processes that maximize productivity and efficiency to exceed organizational objectives.
- Talent for cultivating and fostering solid professional relationships with students, staff, volunteers, directors, industry professionals, and stakeholders, ensuring transparent communication at all levels.

Areas of Expertise:

- Budget Oversight & Administration
 - Process Improvement
 - Policy Development & Implementation
 - Strategic Planning
 - Data Analysis / Routine Reporting
 - Problem Solving & Conflict Resolution
 - Leadership & Training
 - Student Engagement
 - Cross-functional Collaboration
 - Mentorship & Coaching
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Administrative Experience

Director of Special Education/Instructional Coach

2018 – Present

Southside Elementary Charter School, Providence, RI

Oversee Special Education Program strategic development and planning. Collaborate with school Principal to coordinate services and provide daily support to student with special needs. Continuously evaluate and refine resources for total special education program, curriculum, procedures, and individual student needs and achievements. Evaluate and institute educational standards and program goals in alignment with federal and state regulations and legislation. Direct the strategic implementation of federal and state grant applications. Promote transparent communication with parents, teachers, administrators, and community members.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Established the Parent Advisory Committee to garner essential feedback and insight.
- Mentored Interventionist to successfully obtain Special Education certification.
- Provided instructional coaching, observation, and evaluation to two teachers and the school principal, contributing performance feedback and recommendations in adherence to standards.

CEO/President for Program Development and Grants

2015 – 2017

The Groden Network, Providence, RI

Served as trusted consultant for day, residential, and community programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities and autism across three corporations with a budget of \$33M. Secured a synergetic relationship with Wide Diversity and Equity Committee for ongoing collaborations.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Progressed to role of CEO/President from Administrative Consultant in 2016.
- Boosted referrals by forging and nurturing key external partnerships.
- Strategically brought program budgets in line with planning by ensuring strict compliance team wide.

Department Director

2011– 2015

Department of Children, Youth and Families, State of Rhode Island, Providence, RI

Directed the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families while concurrently overseeing a combined budget of \$233M+ and 600+ state staff. Spearheaded all state programs for child welfare, children's behavioral health, and juvenile justice programs. Governed and coordinated licensing of childcare and residential programs, contracting, and prevention services.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Developed and enacted LGBTQI care policies and trained Administrative Team on best practices to provide compassionate services.

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- Established Wellness and Psychological Aid Committee for workers and families undergoing secondary trauma.
- Effectively reduced congregate care and increased foster care by implementing strategic plans.
- Enhanced the lives of numerous families by conceiving and enforcing new family- and child-focused policies.

CEO/President

2006 – 2011

Harmony Hill School, Chepachet, RI

Supervised 156 staff members and administrative leadership team while overseeing a \$9M nonprofit budget. Served as integral component to day, residential, and community program strategic planning, coordination, and development. Liaised with external agencies to establish ongoing relationships and ensure adherence to standards.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Served as Co-Director of Psychological Diagnostic Associates program.
- Introduced inaugural environmental/horticultural, pet, and trauma informed therapy programs and enrichment classes.

Additional Experience

Principal ▪ Narragansett Elementary School, Narragansett, RI

Faculty, Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership ▪ Johnson and Wales University, Providence, RI

Visiting Professor ▪ University of Hartford, Hartford, CT

Administrator of Special Services ▪ Narragansett School District, Narragansett, RI

Principal ▪ Quidnessett Elementary School, North Kingstown, RI

Instructor ▪ Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

Instructor ▪ University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

Assistant Executive Director ▪ Harmony Hill School, Chepachet, RI

Special Education Coordinator ▪ Chariho School District

Principal/Special Education Director ▪ Harmony Hill School, Chepachet, RI

Special Education Resource Teacher ▪ Exeter School District

Kindergarten Teacher ▪ St. Euphery School District, Montreal, Quebec

Therapist ▪ South Shore Mental Health, Charlestown, RI

Teaching Experience

Adjunct Professor, Present

Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

Prepare and instruct Life Span I and II courses for the Graduate MAT program of Teaching and Learning in Art and Design. Develop course curriculum, provide course assistance, and grade assignments in a timely manner. Foster strong ethics and professionalism with students.

Graduate Program Faculty, 2002 – 2013

Providence College, Providence, RI

Taught The Psychology of the Middle School Student: Mental Health Issues in our Schools and Principals course for graduate students while facilitating and moderating insightful classroom discussions. Developed essential course materials, including curriculum, syllabi, homework, and handouts. Efficiently graded and evaluated student assignments, administering crucial feedback to amplify student success.

Educational Background

Post-Doctoral Study, Certificate in Neuropsychology | Fielding Graduate University, New York Cluster

Doctor of Education, Special Education/Administration | Boston University, Boston, MA

Master of Education, Special Education, Concentration in Behavioral-Emotional Disorders | Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

Master of Arts in Counseling & Guidance, Concentration in Gerontology | University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology & Elementary Education | Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

Certificates & Licensure:

- Superintendent of Schools – State of Rhode Island, Department of Education
- Administrator of Special Education – State of Rhode Island, Department of Education

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- Teacher of Elementary Education, K-8 – State of Rhode Island, Department of Education
- Elementary/Middle School Principal – State of Rhode Island, Department of Education
- Guidance Counselor – State of Rhode Island, Department of Education
- Certified Mediator/RIDE 2015 – State of Rhode Island, Department of Education
- Emergency Safety Certificate – FEMA
- Creative Collaborations – Harvard School of Education

Professional Development:

- Certified Special Education Mediator
- Annenburg Principal/National School Reform Faculty
- SmART Faculty for Collaborative Leadership/Critical Friends Coach Training
- Facilitator for National School Leaders Network
- National Certified Principal Mentor/NAESP/PAL
- Facilitator of Aspiring Principals Wellness and Support Group

Affiliations

- Health Care Policy Forum (Fostering Connections) Committee
- Joint Task Force on the Education of Children & Youth in DCYF Care
- Served on Governor's Council on Behavioral Health
- Served on Governor's Early Learning Council
- RI Association of Elementary School Principals
- Association of RI Special Education Administrators
- Association of Curriculum and Development

Grants & Awards

- SAMHSA Expansion Grant
- Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in Foster Care
- Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project
- Well-Being and Adoption after Trauma
- Improving the Use of Psychotropic Medication among Children and Youth in Foster Care
- Champlin Grant; RI Foundation Grants; Laura Bush Foundation Grant; Legislative Grants
- Early Reading Success Initiative-Federal Grant
- RI Foundation Grant for National Museum of Art
- RISD Faculty Grant for Reggio Emilio, Italy
- RITTI; Rotarian; RISCA; RIDE Inclusion Grant; RI VSA; Mellon
- Collaborative Grant with South Kingstown-WRAP-DCYF
- Principal of the Year in RI, 2000

Community Service

- Volunteer – Hospice Beacon, Providence, RI, 2019 – Present
- Board Member – Harvest Acres, Richmond, RI, 2017 – Present
- Board President – Hope Alzheimer's Center, Cranston, RI, 2014 – Present
- Board Member – Whitmarsh House, Providence, RI, 2015 – 2019
- Served as North Kingstown School Committee Member – Representative for Special Education Advisory, Policy Committee
National School Board Affiliate, Committee/Chairperson/ Vice Chairperson/Policy Committee, Strategic Planning Committee