

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

March 4, 2015

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-2a of the Connecticut General Statutes and its Bylaws, appoints Mr. Ajit Gopalakrishnan as Interim Chief Performance Officer, effective immediately, to serve until such time as a Chief Performance Officer is appointed, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of 8:0 this fourth day of March, Two Thousand Fifteen.

Signed: _____
Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary

AJIT GOPALAKRISHNAN

EXPERIENCE

9/2012 – Present **Chief, Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation
Connecticut State Department of Education**

Lead the staff of the Bureau to realize the vision of improving student outcomes through data. Manage statewide functions relative to data collection, reporting, evaluation, and school/district accountability. Develop existing staff through training and coaching to contribute to the new vision and priorities.

Directed research, analyses, and evaluation activities to inform Department and local district initiatives.

- Championed the release of new results such as extended graduation rates, postsecondary outcomes, chronic absenteeism, pre-K impact, Smarter Balanced progress, and choice program effectiveness.
- Continued production of reports on topics of import including student behavior/discipline, special education, English learners, teacher shortage areas, and alternative programs.
- Supported Department initiatives including school turnaround, leadership development, and new assessment administration with timely data, analyses, and reports.
- Developed partnerships with research institutions to evaluate Department programs and better understand the educational profiles of special student populations.

Led the implementation and redesign of Connecticut's school and district accountability model.

- Fully implemented the accountability system described in Connecticut's ESEA flexibility that included performance indices, school classifications, and a new performance report.
- Directed an extensive process of feedback to procure systematic input from diverse stakeholders including local leaders, state/national experts, and Department staff.
- Developed a next generation accountability system that incorporates longitudinal student growth and multiple measures of student success.
- Successfully managed and received federal approval for flexibilities in the areas of field-test assessment and accountability renewal.

Led an overhaul of the Department's data warehouse and created interagency systems for secure information exchange.

- Promoted a new vision and direction for the Department's data warehouse. Achieved substantial progress including development of a new data model, hardware platform, automated data load processes, and reporting interface.
- Co-led the creation of the P20 Workforce Information Network – an unprecedented interagency collaboration designed to gain new insights about individuals served by these agencies.
- Established systems to provide educational information to authorized partner agency staff about children in the care/custody of the state as well as those involved with the court system.

Managed mandated data collections and federal/state reporting.

- Fulfilled federal and state data reporting requirements in a timely and accurate manner.
 - Implemented ongoing reductions/eliminations of data collections as part of the Governor's Red Tape reduction initiative in order to reduce burden on districts.
 - Reinstated data governance processes to provide internal and external stakeholders with opportunity for input in decisions relative to data collection and reporting.
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- Developed and deployed new/upgraded data collection systems for educator assignment, educator evaluation, facility information, and restraint/seclusion.
- Instituted timely/accurate dates and standards, and freeze dates for all data collections.
- Published agency-wide data acquisition plan and data collections guide to benefit districts.

7/2001 – 8/2012 Consultant, Connecticut Department of Education

Administered the Connecticut Competency System (CCS): a research-based framework that integrates adult competencies, content standards, standardized progress assessments and accountability.

- Established and implemented policies for standardized testing including test selection, test administration, score interpretation, test security, field-testing, and computer-based testing.
- Directed professional development activities of CCS trainers to ensure testing integrity and support the use of assessment results to inform curriculum, instruction, and student learning.
- Coordinated the Program Facilitators' Advisory Group to solicit practitioner input.

Managed data collection, reporting, and research activities for adult education.

- Directed the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS), a Web-based student data system.
- Developed and implemented policies for data collection, system security, and data verification.
- Coordinated the CARS advisory group. Designed and delivered training to end-users.
- Oversaw vendor activities including contracts, system enhancements, and helpdesk.
- Designed reports and ad-hoc query tools, and trained practitioners to use these resources to achieve deeper understandings of the underlying causes that influence student outcomes.
- Conducted specialized analyses for various constituents including the legislature, other bureaus, other state agencies, and the public.
- Modeled the use of data for decision-making. Utilized CARS data for systematic research (e.g. postsecondary outcomes of adult education graduates; learning growth and attendance).

Built and refined a program accountability system in collaboration with colleagues and practitioners.

- Established measures, benchmark standards, and a weighting system for evaluating programs on multivariable quality criteria (e.g. recruitment, retention, assessment, performance).
- Conducted the analyses, evaluated program performance, classified programs, and disseminated results. Used accountability results to inform monitoring and technical assistance.
- Facilitated learning from accountability results among program administrators, teacher leaders and colleagues through training and technical assistance.

Led the implementation of the federal accountability system for adult education.

- Developed end of year reports for submission to the US Department of Education.
- Exchanged data with the Department of Labor to ascertain employment outcomes.
- Conducted a survey to determine postsecondary entrance rates.

Supported the Department's Results Based Accountability (RBA) activities.

- Assisted program managers in Magnet and Charter schools, CT Technical High School System, Early Childhood Special Education, and Family Resource Centers to develop RBA report cards.
- Participated actively in interagency RBA committees established by the legislature to create statewide result statements and indicators.
- Developed the RBA report card for adult education in collaboration with colleagues.

Oversaw Connecticut's General Educational Development (GED) testing program.

- Established annual test schedules.
- Trained examiners on the policies and procedures regarding test administration and security.
- Monitored GED Test Sites and the scoring site for compliance.
- Ensured accurate scoring of tests and timely dissemination of results.
- Established and maintained a process for student GED registration.
- Evaluated requests for testing accommodations and age waivers.
- Processed contracts and testing material orders.

Accomplished bureau tasks and leadership functions through inter/intra-agency collaborations.

- Spearheaded the formation and ongoing expansion of the Connecticut Adult Virtual High School: an interdistrict arrangement that offers adult learners the opportunity to learn online.
- Served as state director and unit coordinator for adult education. Organized statewide policy forums. Facilitated unit meetings, and coordinated unit responses to external constituents.
- Actively collaborated with the workforce development community to foster partnerships among adult education, postsecondary training, state agencies, businesses, and foundations.
- Co-lead the Algebra I Model Curriculum project for the Secondary School Reform initiative.

1/1995 – 6/2001 Trainer, Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), CT

Championed several initiatives to facilitate program development and interagency collaboration.

- Designed and implemented strategic planning interventions based on program quality standards for adult education programs. Led the data analysis, interpretation, and feedback processes. Guided leaders to develop measurable action plans that enhance organizational effectiveness.
- Directed Project BUILD – an interagency leadership program for practitioners from different agencies to develop collaborative solutions. Products developed include *If the School Fits* – a video from the student's perspective. Led a team of practitioners through the visioning, filming, editing, production, and marketing. Over 350 videos are being used nationally for student recruitment, orientation, and teacher training.
- Successfully led Connecticut's workplace education initiatives. Responsible for curriculum design, training, and program development. Trained over 25 programs. Orchestrated the formation of a statewide group to increase partnerships and systematize services.

Applied technology expertise to deliver innovative professional development and develop new products.

- Guided the creation of the Institute for Technology Planning, a national model project in technology professional development. Supported 35 programs on technology infrastructure and instructional integration through online courses, workshops, and on-site support.
- Conceived, initiated, and led the production of a pioneering multimedia CD for new teacher orientation. Directed storyboarding, screen design, video/audio production, authoring, beta testing, and marketing. About 300 CDs used in over 30 states. Earned the 1999 *Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Award*. Rated "excellent" by Pennsylvania's *Focus Bulletin*.

Conducted evaluation and program development activities.

- Evaluated K-12 inter-district programs. Established criteria for data collection, created survey instruments, and developed rubrics for data analysis. Analyzed portfolios, surveys, interviews and observations. Consolidated findings into sophisticated reports.

- Developed and supervised the High School Public Affairs Academy. Created measurement tools, established progress indicators, and gathered and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate program effectiveness.

1/1993 – 12/1994 Business Development Associate, Artech Info Systems, NJ

Recruited technical professionals for consulting positions in organizations throughout the northeast. Reviewed resumes, interviewed potential candidates, and coordinated job placement. Marketed services to potential and existing clients.

EDUCATION

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| 1993 | Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) (Management and Industrial Relations), University of Bridgeport |
| 1991 | Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) (Accounting), Loyola College, India |

PUBLICATIONS

- **Extending Accountability: From compliance to learning**, *Literacy & Numeracy Studies*, vol 17, no 3, 2009
- **The Relationship between Learning Gains and Attendance**, *December 2009*
- **Learner Retention in Adult Secondary Education: A Comparative Study**, *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal 2, no. 3 (Nov. 2008)*
- **The Relationship of CASAS Scores to GED Results**, *April 2008*
- **Supporting Technology Integration in Adult Education: Critical issues and models**, *Adult Basic Education*, vol 16, no 1, Spring 2006
- **CASAS Computer-Based Testing in Connecticut Adult Education**, *February 2004*
- **Technology Implementation in Connecticut**, *Maine Fertilizer*, Winter 2003
- **Using Story-Telling in Diversity Training**, *National Adult Literacy Database*, September 2000
- **Book Review: Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most**, *Organizational Development Practitioner*, Summer 2000

PRESENTATIONS

- **The Employment and Postsecondary Outcomes of Adult Learners**, *CAACE Conference*
- **Data Detective Strategies**, *National webinar at the request of the US DOE*
- **Data for Decision-Making**, *Connecticut Statewide Policy Forum, CAACE Conference*
- **Characteristics of Effective and Enduring Organizations**, *CAACE Conference*
- **Interpreting Results from Standardized Tests**, *CAACE Conference*
- **The Connecticut Institute for Technology Planning**, *Adult Literacy/Technology National Conference*
- **Producing Multimedia CDs**, *COABE National Conference, CASAS National Conference*
- **Using the Internet in Instruction**, *CAACE National Conference, School-to-Career Summer Institute*
- **Multicultural Adult Education**, *New England Regional Conference, MA Statewide Conference*

HONORS/AWARDS

Enterprise Award for producing CREC's first ever multimedia CD training
 Beta Gamma Sigma, PHI KAPPA PHI, Who's Who in American Universities