



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 17, 2021

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent 

SUBJECT: MDE Leadership Opportunities

I am pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Sheryl Kennedy as the Michigan Department of Education's legislative liaison.

As a state representative, Dr. Kennedy developed and led a bipartisan educators caucus and developed strong relationships with education stakeholders and legislators on both sides of the aisle. She began her career as a public school classroom teacher for many years before becoming an assistant middle school principal and middle school principal.

The legislative liaison for the Michigan Department of Education participates in all aspects of the development, passage, and implementation of state legislative and regulatory initiatives necessary to carry out the mission of the department. In this role, Dr. Kennedy will be a terrific addition to the department.

In March, MDE will be interviewing for three administrative positions:

- [Chief Deputy Superintendent](#) upon the retirement this summer of Sheila Alles. As many of you are aware, Sheila Alles has not only served admirably as the chief deputy superintendent, but she also had the extraordinary challenge of serving as interim superintendent on the passing of former State Superintendent Brian Whiston.
- [Deputy Superintendent for Educator, Student, and School Supports](#) formerly held by Dr. Venessa Keesler and currently held in an interim capacity by Dr. Bill Pearson.
- [Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)—a newly created position at MDE to help the department drive and coordinate its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

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In support of local public schools and public school children, I look forward to hiring the strongest team members possible for these positions.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors