

Mary T. Emmons

January 11, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in response to the opening posted for the Administrator of Student Services for the Lincoln Public Schools. I have been working in the Acton-Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District since 1996, as an elementary special educator and administrator. I began my administrative career as the Out-of-District Coordinator and then became the Special Education Coordinator for grades 7-12. During the 2014-15 school year I was asked to step in as the Interim Director of Pupil Services for the newly regionalized school district. I am currently the Director of Special Education for the district.

I am very interested in this administrative position for many reasons. First and foremost, I am excited about the possibility of working with the families and students in your unique district. Before moving to Acton, MA, I was a special educator in three other states due to military moves. As the parent of children who attended military base schools as well as the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, I have an appreciation of the culture and challenges of the military life as well as those of your students living in a high achieving school district. In addition to the goodness of fit your position offers, I am seeking opportunities for professional growth. Through my professional and life experience I have developed the skill set and depth of knowledge I believe is essential to this leadership position within your district.

As I have mentioned, prior to working within the Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District I taught elementary special education in three other states. These frequent moves, while difficult, provided me with varied experiences and a broad perspective on interpreting federal legislation related to disability areas and eligibility. These experiences also provided me the opportunity to work in high incidence districts supporting English Language Learners.

I began working for the Acton Public Schools in the fall of 1996 as a special educator at the elementary level. My time at in this position allowed me to implement one of my basic philosophies of education-student needs should dictate services. To implement this philosophy it was necessary to be creative when problem solving in order to develop programming to meet the needs of individual students. I had the opportunity to provide students with inclusion opportunities within the general education classroom as well as to provide direct instruction in content areas.

At the end of the 2002 school year I was asked to interview for the Out-of-District (OOD) Coordinator position for the Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District. This position provided me with the opportunity to further develop leadership and communication skills. One of the main reasons I pursued the Out-of-District Coordinator position was to provide support to students and their parents after the Team had determined a student required placement outside of the public school setting. Reasons for placing students out of

district are as varied as the students themselves. I felt privileged to support students and their families through this process. This position also inspired me to create in-district programs to complete a continuum of programming through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In this position I also collaborated with professionals and agencies throughout the state that provide support and services to students and their families. This knowledge of agencies and supports continues to be a valuable resource when working with families who are trying to navigate a complicated mental health care system.

In 2006, I was asked to consider applying for the Special Education Coordinator for grades 7-12 and worked in this position until I was asked to step in last year as the Interim Director of Pupil Services. In the role of coordinator I was able to put what I consider one of my greatest strengths into practice and that is listening and bringing a Team to consensus. As the Special Education Coordinator I chaired meetings in which I applied current special education regulations and developed programming to address student needs. In addition, I provided supervision, guidance, training and mentoring to special educators, the ELE teacher, and speech and language pathologists.

In September of 2014, I was asked to fill in as the Interim Director of Pupil Services. My initial goal was to make sure our students, families, and staff continued to be supported through the transition of leadership and to ensure services and programs were uninterrupted. During my time serving as the Interim Director, I used my previous experience along with newly acquired skills to analyze and propose the Pupil Services FY'16 budget, submit and monitor DESE regulations, provide oversight of special education, English Language Education, psychological/counseling services and health and nursing services, attend school committee meetings, collaborate with the Superintendent's cabinet and principals, monitor 504 Accommodations Plans, and to serve as the Civil Rights and Homeless Coordinator. In addition, I developed a two-year vision with our Special Education Parent Council to address expanding capacity and to increase collaboration.

This school year the district restructured administrative roles and created a new position, Director of Special Education. All of the responsibilities and mandates related to special education, supervision of special education programs and staff, budget development, and program design continued to be part of this position. My goal in this position has been to ensure the needs of our students inform our decision-making. Promoting inclusive practices with a focus on social emotional well-being for students has been a priority.

I believe my extensive body of work in education along with my ability to develop trusting relationships with administration, community leaders, staff, students and parents has provided me with the depth and breadth of experience needed for this unique and exciting opportunity.

I would appreciate your consideration for the position of Administrator of Student Services.



Sincerely,  
Mary T. Emmons

# Mary T. Emmons

## EDUCATION

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University of South Dakota Vermillion, SD B.S. Elementary Education and Special Education	1983
Simmons College-Boston, MA M.S.Ed. Special Education	2000

## CERTIFICATIONS

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Special Needs (Pre K-9), Special Needs (5-12), Elementary (1-6), Special Education Administrator (All Levels, Initial)

## EMPLOYMENT

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Director of Special Education-Acton, MA Acton-Boxborough Regional School District	2015-Present
Interim Director Pupil Services-Acton, MA Acton-Boxborough Regional School District	2014-2015
Special Education Coordinator-Acton, MA Acton-Boxborough Regional School District	2006-2014
Out-of-District Coordinator-Acton, MA Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, Acton Public Schools	2002-2006
Special Educator-Acton, MA Conant School, Acton Public Schools	1996-2002
Intervention Specialist, Special Educator-Kettering, OH Greenmont Elementary School, Kettering Public Schools	1993-1996
Resource Teacher-Mansfield, TX Glen Harmon Elementary School, Mansfield Unified School District	1992-1993
Elementary Special Educator-Lompoc, CA Lompoc Unified School District	1990-1992

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Director of Special Education**

**2015-Present**

- Collaborate bi-weekly with the District Leadership Team (Cabinet)
- Attend and Collaborate bi-weekly with Principals and Cabinet
- Collaborate with individual Central Office Administration (Superintendent, Director of Personnel and Finance Director) on a regular and as needed basis
- Develop and propose the FY'17 Budget for Special Education
- Realign budget line items to accurately reflect projected spending

- Collaborate regularly with Pupil Services staff and principals to identify staffing needs
- Develop and propose Pupil Services staffing for FY'16 and FY'17 to meet the needs of high risk populations within the district
- Coordinate and collaborate with district-wide staff to develop the panel presentations for the purpose of the budget presentation
- Monitor costs related to Out-Of-District (OOD) tuitions with updated information from the Out-of-District Coordinator and Finance Department
- Plan and facilitate bi-weekly Student Services Special Education Leadership staff meetings
- Supervise Administrative special education staff through weekly meetings to collaborate on district and student issues
- Meet monthly with individual building principals
- Responsible for the special education portion of the upcoming CPR
- Supervise Student Service office staff to address legal mandates of time-lines related to special education
- Present special education program development proposal to the School Committee
- Continue to analyze data related to student needs and trends with on-going program review
- Collaborate with the Director of Curriculum to develop professional development training
- Submit grants
- Participate in monthly meetings with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council and Executive SpEd Pac board
- Attend to legal and fiscal issues and responsibilities related to special education placements with a focus on resolving conflicts
- Implement federal laws related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Provide training for staff and administration
- Directly involved in decision making at the BSEA and in mediation
- Attend ASE, EDCO and CASE meetings
- Support special educators and school psychologists with developing eligibility protocols
- Facilitate working group to analyze inclusionary practices and interventions
- Attend ACCEPT Special Education Leadership Academy

**Interim Director of Pupil Services**

**2014-2015**

*All tasks under the Director of Special Education (refer to above description) were part of the previous Director of Pupil Services role*

- Monitored English Language Learning mandates, 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act
- Created a 5 year plan for incremental staffing changes and long-range planning based upon student needs
- Advised, trained and provided input as needed to administrators in the areas of Civil Rights, Student Discipline and Bullying legislation
- Attended and participated in bi-weekly School Committee Meetings
- Developed and proposed all Pupil Services staffing for FY'16 and FY'17 to meet the needs of high risk populations within the district
- Developed and presented the FY'16 budget to the School Committee and public
- Provided parent information sessions to discuss parental concerns related to pre-school proposals and regionalization

- Submitted Special Education Program Plan Statement to ensure continued federal funding through IDEA
- Participated in the Low Income Education Access Project (LEAP) with DESE to support policy development
- Analyzed previous budgets and line items to propose and realign the FY'16 budget

**Special Education Coordinator (7-12)**

**2006-2014**

- Collaborated weekly with the Pupil Services Leadership team
- Participated on the junior high school and senior high school Leadership Teams.
- Developed and monitored department budgets (summer programming, contracted services, home-hospital tutoring, extended day services)
- Participated in the interview process to hire professional and non-professional staff with responsibility for supervision/evaluation
- Provided oversight of English Learner Education and supervised the 7-12 ELE teacher
- Created and implemented on-going staff development programs for teachers, specialists, clinicians, and assistants
- Supported staff in the implementation of federal and state regulations
- Developed in-district specialized programming in the area of Autism spectrum disorders, ensuring a continuum of services
- Planned monthly Special Education staff meetings with the junior high school and senior high school staff
- Supervised and supported training for the new teacher evaluation system
- Collaborated regularly with building based administrators and counseling departments at both the junior high school and senior high school
- Created and presented staff development trainings such as IEP development, disciplinary regulations, transitional planning
- Participated in further development of procedures for pre-referral for the Student Assistance and Child Study Teams
- Implemented an annual series of transition meetings and programs for parents transitioning their children with special needs from Grade 6-7 and 8-9
- Prepared and presented an annual "College Planning Night" specific to the needs of students with disabilities (504's & IEP's)
- Chaired Evaluation Team Meetings with proficiency in addressing and speaking to all areas of educational assessment and disability identification
- Coordinated transitional planning with outside services agencies (Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Developmental Disabilities, and Department of Mental Health)
- Provided training in the area of transitional planning to special educators, psychologists, and counselors
- Supported staff with the development of District Determined Measures
- Supported development of vocational/employability opportunities for students.
- Collaborated regularly with building and regional department leaders at the high school & junior high school to address building based issues
- Introduced a Transition Coordinator position at the high school level

**Out-of-District Coordinator:**

**2002-2006**

- Liaison for 94 out-of-district (OOD) students ages 3-22 with responsibility for the referral process, overseeing programming and IEP development, chairing and

scheduling Team meetings, observing students and programs, and oversight of the OOD budget and circuit breaker reimbursement

- Collaborated with school directors and staff in out-of-district placements to support IEP development, understanding of special education laws and procedures and to ensure appropriate programming
- Participated in monthly meetings with ABRHS principal and CASE Collaborative directors
- Collaborated with in-district special education coordinators regarding at risk student needs
- Collaborated with state agencies and related personnel such as the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Youth Services, the Department of Children and Family Services, Educational Surrogate Parents, Guardian ad litem appointed by the juvenile courts, and local law enforcement
- Supported students and their parents through the process of placement in an OOD school and provided ongoing support after placement was determined
- Worked directly with the Director of Pupil Services to project the out-of-district budget and to monitor changes throughout the year
- Responsible for Purchase Orders to OOD schools, monitoring payments, and making changes to the OOD budget as appropriate
- Calculated Circuit Breaker for reimbursement of tuition costs
- Responsible for hiring bus assistants for medically fragile students who require transportation and ensured the development and availability of a medical protocol related to student needs
- Arranged transportation for all OOD students to and from school
- Provided an in-service training opportunity for the CASE Collaborative bus drivers to assist them with understanding the categories of disabilities and how the disability may relate to behavior, suggestions for dealing with behavioral issues on the bus, and their responsibility as mandated reporters
- Responsible for ensuring OOD students met the requirements for graduation
- Developed the transcript and a procedure for ensuring preservation of the transcript through the ABRHS counseling department
- Responsible for the 688 referral process to support collaboration with the Department of Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Mental Health and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission with assistance to students before and during transition to adult services

#### **Teaching- Elementary Special Educator**

**1990-2002**

- Responsible for programming for students with various disabilities with IEP development and implementation of the IEP
- Participated in co-teaching models to provide inclusion experiences for special education students based on individual needs
- Implemented a wide range of research-based instructional programs to address individual learning needs
- Proficient in administering and interpreting standardized assessment tools related to achievement and ability and to synthesize information from other professionals and reports to assist with determining disability and eligibility for special education
- Developed comprehensive reports related to assessment and diagnostic observation to determine Specific Learning Disabilities and Intellectual Disabilities