



DATE: July 31, 2020
TO: All County Superintendents
FROM: Ted Alejandre, CCSESA President
SUBJECT: CCSESA Executive Director Announcement

On behalf of the Executive Committee, it is my pleasure to announce that earlier this afternoon the CCSESA Board of Directors unanimously confirmed the selection of Karen Stapf Walters as the next executive director of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), effective September 21, 2020.



Karen Stapf Walters

Karen's 25-year career in education started as a teacher in Ohio and progressed to service, during the past seven years, as executive director of the California State Board of Education (2013-2020)—advising Governors Edmund G. Brown and Gavin Newsom on education policy issues. As the chief executive staff member of the State Board of Education, Karen has been responsible for leading the effort to implement Local Control Funding Formula and its accountability provisions. As many of you know first-hand, she has played an integral role in the development of California's statewide system of support that relies heavily on the active engagement of all 58 county offices of education.

Karen brings invaluable association management experience to CCSESA. From 1999 through 2013, she established a proven track record of success at the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), where she served as the Assistant Executive Director for Governmental Relations and Interim Executive Director. Karen's impressive career also includes first-hand knowledge of the legislative process as she directly influenced the crafting of public policy in the California Legislature as a committee consultant and Senior Staff member to Senator Lucy Killea (1990-1996).

The executive committee and board were particularly impressed by Karen's appreciation of the historic, unique and essential role that has been assigned to county offices of education in the state constitution. As we also know, she has been personally involved in a leadership role for the Governor, as our responsibility and authority was enhanced by the Legislature and Governors Brown and Newsom.

Specifically, Karen brings in-depth knowledge and perspective on the essential responsibilities assigned county offices in the statewide system of support for California's school districts and their students as well as our long-standing AB 1200 duties associated with ensuring that LEAs meet and maintain their financial obligations. She also has an excellent understanding of the direct services county superintendents provide to California's most high risk and economically disadvantaged students through our alternative education and special education programs. We truly believe Karen is the right person at the right time to lead our organization.

I want to acknowledge and thank Leadership Associates, Dave Gordon and his team at the Sacramento County Office of Education for their expertise and guidance. The executive committee relied heavily on both of these outstanding organizations throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Finally and most importantly, I want to personally thank each of you for contributing your insights, recommendations, time and commitment to the success of this effort to recruit a new Executive Director for our association. Our ability to secure the services of Karen Stapf Walters as CCSESA's new executive director was a real team effort. We can all celebrate the success of this process.

As Karen assumes her new responsibilities in late September, I know that you will take the opportunity to reach out and welcome her to our organization. As always, please feel free to contact me directly if you have questions or need any additional information.