



Debra Hixon At-Large Seat 9

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The School Board of Broward County, Florida

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April 20, 2024

Dear Vermont Senate Education Committee Member:

My name is Debbi Hixon and I am a staunch believer in public education. I have served as an elected member of the Broward County School since 2020. Before being elected, I was a teacher for over 30 years. It is from this perspective that I highly recommend Zoie Saunders for the Vermont Secretary of Education. I have had the pleasure of working with Zoie for several years and can attest to her dedication, expertise, and results-driven approach. Zoie is a visionary leader passionate about improving student outcomes, promoting equity, and ensuring every student has access to a great public school. Her deep understanding of our education system's challenges and her ability to develop innovative solutions make her an invaluable asset to any organization.

Throughout her career in education, Zoie has demonstrated her ability to lead teams and achieve measurable results. As the Chief Education Officer for the City of Ft. Lauderdale, Zoie launched and led a new government office to expand learning opportunities for 180,000 residents. In this role, she was recognized for innovation in education by the U.S. Department of Labor, National League of Cities, State of Florida Department of Education, Broward County Public Schools, and Neighborhoods USA.

Most recently, Zoie was the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer for Broward County Public Schools, one of the nation's largest school districts. She was instrumental in developing a plan for repurposing and redesigning our school district as a response to lower enrollment and aging facilities. Zoie approached the repurposing discussion with a commitment to strengthening public schools and attracting more students to the district. She centered the conversations around students, often saying that change is only worth it if it gives students more opportunities. Zoie is a trusted collaborator who excels at building relationships with educators, parents, state and local officials, and civic leaders. She is a skilled communicator who can articulate complex ideas and strategies in a clear and compelling way.

I am confident that Zoie would be an exceptional Secretary of Education in Vermont and will work to improve student outcomes and promote equity in education. She is a proven leader committed to making a difference in the lives of students and educators alike.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Debra Hixon

Debra Hixon
Vice Chair/Countywide School Board Member Seat 9
Broward County School Board