

## Christine G. Whitmire MEd

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**INTEREST** I'm writing to express my interest in serving on the Governing Board for the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MIAEYC). I believe I would strengthen the board with my passion, education and varied experiences serving the field of early childhood. I've had many opportunities over a 25-year span, ranging from parent liaison to principal. More specifically, I've been an active and innovative state board member for neighboring Indiana AEYC, serving as chapter president, public policy chair and leadership co-chair. My time in the field has allowed me to incorporate many of the core beliefs promoted by MIAEYC: excellence and innovation, transparency, reflection, equity and opportunity and collaborative relationships. It is my hope you see these beliefs played out in my life's work on behalf of early childhood.

**EDUCATION** Born and raised in Grand Rapids, I received my bachelor's degree in Secondary Education at Michigan State University. Not quite satisfied with my career choice, I completed my master's degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in Early Childhood at Indiana University-South Bend. Later on, I received licenses as a Building Administrator for both Indiana and Michigan. I have additional certifications as a facilitator/trainer in Love and Logic for Early Childhood as well as the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and Project Learning Tree. Recently, I became a trainer for Michigan's Essential Practices in Early Literacy.

**EXPERIENCE** I've worked in the field of education for over 25 years. Early in my career, I worked as a secondary science teacher and as science facilitator for children grades preK-12. After the birth of my two children (one with special needs), I worked as the first Parent Liaison for Penn-Harris-Madison/Mishawaka Joint Services for Special Education. Later on, I worked with families of young children birth to 3, bringing Parents as Teachers home visiting programs to the Holland and Allendale School Districts for the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, where I supported bilingual and rural families.

I've worked for the past 15 years in the Michigan-Indiana area, developing and facilitating a variety of educational programs for young children that emphasize the importance of building strong relationships with families. Just prior to my current role, I served as principal for a high quality, NAEYC and HighScope-accredited school for young children that I began in 2011. I've also worked at Berrien Regional Education Service Agency, assisting with: Parents as Teachers, Great Start Readiness Program, Even Start and Early Head Start. In addition, I've been an instructor for Indiana University-South Bend, teaching early childhood math and science teaching methods to young people new to the field.

Currently, I serve as the Director of Early Childhood Education for the Lewis Cass Intermediate School District in Cass County, serving as both Early Childhood Contact and Early Childhood Specialist for four local school districts with early education programming and support. In that work, I oversee the Great Start Readiness Program, Parents as Teachers, and the Great Start Collaborative.

**PASSION** For many years, I've championed the needs of families and young children in poverty in public and private settings. From 2013-2016 I served as Family Engagement Co-Chair for the Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee, delivering a new Indiana Family Engagement Toolkit for use in early childhood educational programming across the state. During that tenure as Co-chair, I represented the early childhood community by testifying to the Indiana state legislature on the benefits of family engagement in early childhood care and education.

These opportunities provided me with a depth of knowledge and experience working on issues of deep importance to early childhood educators: equity in pay, family access to high quality programs, advocacy on behalf of the profession. I've worked within the local Indiana chapter to implement strategies that involve engaging youth interested in the early childhood profession through: book studies, student showcases, mentorships, career fairs, and community events. I've also had the incredible experience of visiting Reggio Emilia, Italy, to study their world-renowned approach to supporting young children. Over the years, I've presented at the state and national level on: early childhood environments, high quality program design, leadership, and nature play with young children.

These varied and meaningful experiences in the field lead me to believe I would serve as a strong representative for the Southwestern Chapter of MIAEYC, and I would be honored to serve in this role for our region.