



CARNELIUS D. GILDER

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ABOUT ME

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do.”
—Leonardo da Vinci

My 19-year career in education has been defined by transformational leadership across multiple roles — Superintendent of Schools, Executive Director of Academics, Campus Administrator, and Classroom Teacher. Each experience has strengthened my passion for advancing academic excellence, empowering educators, and ensuring equitable opportunities for all students.

As Superintendent of West Sabine ISD, I have led the district through a period of remarkable growth and revitalization. Under my leadership, the district's accountability rating improved from a D to a B, a testament to strategic instructional alignment, enhanced staff capacity, and a renewed culture of collaboration and purpose. I have secured millions in competitive grant funding, modernized district communication systems, and expanded Career and Technical Education (CTE) and college-readiness pathways to prepare students for success beyond graduation.

From 2023–2025, West Sabine ISD has been recognized for its steady academic gains, innovative leadership development model, and commitment to rural district transformation. I have been honored with regional and statewide recognition for effective school turnaround, instructional leadership, and community partnership development, including features in education leadership forums and superintendent panels across Texas.

My leadership philosophy centers on service, equity, and empowerment — cultivating environments where students, teachers, and leaders thrive. By mentoring emerging administrators, strengthening district systems, and engaging families and community partners, I remain focused on sustaining progress and creating a legacy of excellence for the students of West Sabine ISD.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
— Nelson Mandela



EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Sam Houston State University | Huntsville, TX
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, 2021
Concurrent Superintendent Certification Program

Master of Education in Instructional Leadership, 2012
Concurrent Principal Certification Program
Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication,
Minor in English, 2006

SBEC Certifications

- Superintendent, Principal
- ELAR (4-8), Generalist (4-8)

PROFILE OF PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

13 Years in Education Leadership

- Served in roles including Superintendent of Schools, Executive Director of Academics, and Campus Administrator/Principal, leading district- and campus-wide initiatives in rural and suburban educational settings.

5 Years as Superintendent

- Led West Sabine ISD as the Chief Executive Officer, overseeing instructional leadership, finance, operations, and communications.
- Increased the district's fund balance by millions while maintaining a perfect School FIRST Rating for two consecutive years.

4 Years in District-Level Leadership

- Directed district-wide academic initiatives and professional development as Executive Director of Academics, aligning curriculum and enhancing instructional outcomes.
- Created Academic and Communication Systems for the district.

4 Years as Campus Administrator

- Managed academic and operational responsibilities as Grade Level Principal/Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, & Principal improving campus culture, instructional quality, and student engagement.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Financial Stewardship:** Increased the district's fund balance from \$4.6M to \$6.47M while sustaining a perfect School FIRST Financial Integrity Rating for two consecutive years.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Directed the acquisition and strategic planning for the West Sabine Leadership and Community Development Center and facilitated a \$1 million elementary cafeteria renovation. Advanced district growth through the addition of a 3,300 sq. ft. Annex Building and acquisition of 10 acres of property to support future development.
- **Program Expansion:** Secured and directed over \$3.55 million in funding and facility improvements to expand student opportunities and strengthen district infrastructure. Key initiatives include:
 - \$140,429 Texas Workforce Commission JET Grant to modernize the Applied Agricultural Engineering program and introduce new Career and Technical Education pathways.
 - \$150,000 multi-entity investment to establish the district's Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Academy, broadening post-graduation career options for students.
 - \$1 million in federal funding for a "Stop the Violence" initiative focused on staff training, bullying prevention, and student advocacy.
 - \$2 million in stadium upgrades and \$260,000 in campus restroom renovations, including new teacher restrooms, enhancing facilities, accessibility, and the overall learning environment.
- **Academic Leadership:** Elevated the district's accountability rating from D to B by aligning curriculum and strengthening professional development through the creation of the Office of Academics.
- **Communication Innovation:** Implemented a district-wide communication system overhaul, including a new app, website, and cloud-based tools, enhancing stakeholder engagement and operational efficiency.
- **Recognition and Leadership:**
 - Selected for Thompson Executive Leadership Academy #33 (2025) and the Leadership Impact Superintendent Institute at Southern Methodist University.
 - Named one of the Top 50 Black Professionals and Entrepreneurs of Texas, TASB Regional Superintendent of the Year (2024), Sam Houston State University College of Education Distinguished Educator of the Year (2025), Educator Insider Top 10 Superintendent of the Year (2025), and POWER Magazine Men's Empowerment Series (2025).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

• SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

West Sabine Independent School District | Pineland, TX

2020–Present

- Serve as the district's Chief Executive Officer, overseeing all aspects of operations, including finance, curriculum and instruction, facilities, transportation, and human resources.
- Fostered collaboration among district leadership to implement a unified vision and strategic plan, emphasizing student success, staff development, and community engagement.
- Developed and executed fiscally responsible budgets to support administrative, instructional, and operational priorities, growing the district's financial reserves while maintaining compliance with state standards.
- Directed the implementation of curriculum enhancements through the creation of the Office of Academics, ensuring alignment with state standards and improving instructional outcomes.
- Championed innovative programs to establish Career and Technical Education (CTE), introducing new career pathways to better prepare students for postsecondary opportunities and workforce demands.
- Strengthened district communications through the launch of a new district app, updated website, and streamlined messaging tools to improve transparency and stakeholder engagement.
- Successfully led the acquisition and planning for the West Sabine Leadership and Community Development Center to provide advanced facilities for district and community use.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ACADEMICS & CURRICULUM MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

West Sabine Independent School District | Pineland, TX

2016–2020

- Directed district-wide academic programs, ensuring vertical alignment of PK–12 curriculum to support student preparedness for state assessments and future educational opportunities.
- Designed and implemented professional development initiatives to enhance teacher effectiveness, collaborating with regional service centers to provide targeted training aligned with district goals.
- Provided guidance and mentorship to campus leaders on instructional strategies, data-driven decision-making, and program implementation.
- Played a critical role in integrating a new teacher evaluation system, training administrators and staff to ensure consistency in appraisal practices and alignment with district priorities.
- Partnered with community organizations and higher education institutions to expand opportunities for students, including dual enrollment and early learning programs.

GRADE LEVEL/ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL & DEAN OF STUDENTS

Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District | Spring, TX

2013–2016

- Supported the building principal in managing the academic and operational aspects of the campus, ensuring a positive and productive learning environment for students and staff.
- Conducted teacher evaluations and collaborated with instructional teams to identify professional growth opportunities and enhance teaching practices.
- Served as the liaison for bilingual education programs, facilitating compliance with state and district regulations and addressing the needs of English Language Learners.
- Coordinated campus safety initiatives, managing duty schedules, student supervision, and emergency protocols to maintain a secure learning environment.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

West Sabine High School, West Sabine Independent School District | Pineland, TX

2012–2013

- Provided leadership in overseeing daily operations, including teacher duty assignments, extracurricular activities, and compliance with federal and state education regulations.
- Managed student support systems, including attendance, discipline, and activity programs, to ensure alignment with district objectives and promote a positive school climate.
- Supported teachers in integrating instructional strategies and technology into their classrooms to improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

SUMMARY OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

West Sabine Elementary School, West Sabine Independent School District |

Pineland, TX

2007–2012

- 6th, 5th, and 4th grades. English/Language Arts and Social Studies. §504, Special Services Coordinator.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & AFFILIATIONS

PROFESSIONAL

Thompson Executive Leadership Institute

- Superintendent Academy Cohort #33

Texas Association of School Administrators

- Executive Committee, Inaugural Design Team-Small Schools Network
- Future-Ready Superintendents Leadership Network

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)

- 2024 Regional (SOTY) Superintendent of the Year
- Presenter/Facilitator, Small School District Seminar

Texas Alliance of Black School Educators (TABSE)

- Superintendent Institute Member
- Statewide Presenter

National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE)

- Member, Leaders' Table Collaborative

Texas Association of Rural Schools

- Member (2021)
- Executive Committee (2022–2025)

COMMUNITY & PHILANTHROPIC

Pineland Service Club

- Immediate Past President & Past Fundraising Chairman
- Funds Allocation Committee, Chairman

Pineland Housing Authority

- 2nd Vice President of Trustees

Lamar Institute of Technology/Southeast

Texas Consortium of Nursing Advisory

- Advisory Committee Member

American Educational Research Association

- Graduate Student Council Member
- National Division A Executive Committee Member

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)

- Superintendent Member
- National Presenter/Facilitator

Sabine County Shared Service Arrangement

- Board of Trustees

Moak Casey

- Client Advisory Council ESCs 6,7,8

Region 7 Education Service Center

- Regional Executive Committee, Superintendent Advisory Committee

Raise Your Hand Texas

- House District #11 Core Team Member
- State of Texas Advocate
- Guest Contributor

National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)

- National Presenter/Facilitator

BOM Bank

- (CDFI) Advisory Board Member

Sabine County Economic Development Committee

- Member/Representative

Pineland Early Learning Center

- Presiding Board Member (2020–2024)

Sabine County Senior Activity & Nutrition Center

- Board Member, Operating Board Member

Personal Mantra:

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Dr. Maya Angelou

REFERENCES

Dr. Kevin Brown

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I.N.S.P.I.R.E.

(Integrity-Needs of Students-Strategic Alignment-High Performance-Impact-Relationship-Excellence)

"I LEAD with Integrity, Center every decision on the Needs of students, Create Strategic alignment, Pursue High Performance, Drive meaningful Impact, Strengthen Relationships, and Build a culture of Excellence."