



DONNA DUNSON

Winter Haven, FL 33881

863-604-8307

W: donnadunson412@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A creative and passionate educational leader with demonstrated strengths in designing educational communities where educators and students can flourish. Strong background designing start up schools and transforming existing schools; redesigning academic and behavior programs leading to increase in academic and behavior performance of students.

EXPERIENCE

Dunson Designs for Education, LLC | Winter Haven, FL

May 2023 - Current
Founder and Principal Consultant

At Dunson Designs for Education, our purpose is to help students navigate the school experience and to guide the college process. Teaching the students that they are the architects of their lives. After 30+ years in educational management, I am shifting the focus from school design to guiding individual students through the college process and assisting students with general educational needs. The Dunson method involves a shift in thinking; the shift is to seize control and design your life.

Lake Wales High School | Lake Wales, Florida

March 2010 - June 2022
Principal

- Transformed the culture and climate of LWHS by pulling the staff and students into the foundational work needed to change this school. Met with a student groups 5-6 times a year to garner the opinions of the key stakeholders, as they sought to improve the academic life as well as the climate.
Achieved a full restructuring and redesign of Lake Wales High School.
- Improved overall graduation rate from 70% to 96%-minority graduation improvement from 64%-96%. Guided students from 45% to an 85% college bound population & added more Career Academies.
- Built a college program that included college trips for this Title One high school. Created a program under the name of Design Your Life; this included seminars for students and parents. Added more guidance counselors to provide the expertise needed to create the increase of college bound students. Privately funded.
- Implemented the International Baccalaureate Program; this was privately funded and is considered one of the top performing IB schools in the state.
- Established a partnership with National Educational Equity Lab which provided college credit with Wesleyan and Howard University. Designed for Title One schools.
- Cultivated donors who collectively gave over 5 million to enhance and enrich the academic offerings as well as funds to help build a vibrant culture.
- Created a curriculum framework, Keystone Academic Design, which included a school-wide vocabulary to connect the idea of viewing all learning through the lens of design and architecture. Was award a FLDOE grant for \$250,000.

Edward W. Bok Academy | Lake Wales, FL

January 2007 - January 2010
Founding Principal

- Directed a team of excellent educators in designing and implementing a school that achieved an "A" rating from the state of Florida every year of my tenure. Designed and wrote the curriculum for Bok Academy based on the framework that all learning should be seen through the lens of design and architecture.
- Built a partnership with Bok Tower Gardens which enhanced every aspect of our work at Bok Academy.
- Developed private funding for over half million dollars to add a 1:1 laptop program, a cycling and kayak program as well as major support of the arts.

SKILLS

- Building vibrant school cultures
- Creating the conditions for improved academic and behavior performance
- Valuing the voice of the educators and students.
- Teacher cultivation and development
- College & Career Counseling
- Curriculum Design
- Change Management

- Created Vibrant Culture: Bok Regattas, swimming, boat races, kayaking, climbing walls, cycling, book clubs, robotics, community meetings, and Speaker's Series.

Polk Avenue Elementary | Lake Wales, FL

January 2003 - January 2007

Principal

- Achieved an A rating after 3 consecutive years of strategic changes. Boosted student performance using ambitious goals and instituted plans with deep support for classroom needs and support for the educators.
- Eliminated deficit spending in a two-year period.
- Improved the building and grounds during my tenure by creating a landscaped courtyard and a garden area.
- Facilitated a collaborative spirit among the staff which led to the academic & behavior improvements.

Ross School | East Hampton, NY

January 2002 - January 2003

Head of School

- Design and establish a collaboration with a public high school in East Hampton - generated approximately \$200,000
- Ross-Harvard seminar on Globalization and Education
- Conducted an extensive curriculum review
- Oversee M-term - field study programs - Senior Projects
- Assists in creating a partnership with a Swedish school

Atlanta International School | Atlanta, GA

January 1993 - January 2001

Head of Upper School

- Conceived Keystone Curriculum Framework - architectural approach to learning in grades 6-10
- Community Service grades 6-12 (Established International Students Against Landmines which was honored at the UN Canada-UN Landmine Treaty Signing.
- Co-creator of Center for the Advancement of International Education.
- Oversee International Baccalaureate Program and expansion
- Field Experiences-curriculum based: Africa- community service; Mesa Verde architecture; Europe-art and architecture

NPR affiliate WUWF | Pensacola, Florida

January 1990 - January 1993

Editorial & Feature Writer

Wrote and delivered a news commentary each week on WUWF Public Broadcasting Station

Pensacola High School | Pensacola, FL

August 1981 - July 1993

International Baccalaureate Coordinator-District Magnet Program Founding Coordinator

- Founding Coordinator of IB magnet—Consulted for start up IB schools in US
- Created systems for Admissions and College Counseling
- Lear House Project combining community service and fund raising; redesign and renovated a Victorian house and held a Decorator's Showcase.
- Taught English and Journalism - County Teacher of the Year for English and Regional Teacher of the Year for Journalism
- Created an award winning Journalism program-numerous awards from state association of high school journalism programs

Pensacola Catholic High & WCOA radio news station | Pensacola, FL

August 1980 - July 1982

Teacher and Journalist

- English and history teacher
- Asst News Editor

PROFESSIONAL HONORS

International Baccalaureate Heads of School Committee
Worldwide 15 member governing Board
Elected to serve 2-3 year terms
1995-2001

International Baccalaureate Development Committee
Grant writing to create development opportunities
1998-2001

International Baccalaureate American Representative for redesign of the CAS
Program
1996-1998

President of the Florida League of IB Schools
1989-1990

International Baccalaureate Workshop Leader from 1990-2000

EDUCATION

BA
University of West Florida

MA
University of West Florida

