

Anuj Saran

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November 8, 2021

Subject: Application for the LWCS Superintendent Position

Dear LWCS Superintendent Search Committee Members,

I had a circuitous route to education and am fondly referred to as the *Accidental Educator*. Over the last 16 years, I have had the privilege of teaching at Polk Avenue Elementary, co-founding Bok Academy South, and am currently the Head of the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Assistant Principal at Lake Wales High School. My core responsibility is at the high school but the depth and breadth of my work has spiraled throughout Lake Wales Charter (details can be found in the chronicle of initiatives):

- In 2008, a donation enabled me to implement a 1:1 MacBook program for teachers at Bok Academy.
- In 2010, another donation led me to introduce the first iPad carts in classrooms; this laid the foundation for an Apple Distinguished School.
- In 2011, I moved all six schools off Polk County Public Schools technology infrastructure, on to our own network and got E-rate funding for all schools; generating over \$2.4 million to date and counting.
- Led the K-12 data-driven instruction committee for all seven schools.
- Spearheaded the development of a data automation hub and oversaw the implementation of Clever.
- Developed a mental health portal used by all social workers in LWCS
- Over the years, I have assisted other school leaders with budget and financial analysis.
- In 2020, I oversaw the implementation of Khan Academy system-wide (LWCS was one of 11 school districts nationwide). The successful partnership with Henry McCance and his generosity has enhanced education at Lake Wales Charter as a whole.
- Currently serving as one of three administrators at Bok South during their transition phase.

For over a decade, I have been responsible for the business side of running a school. In addition to serving as the Head of IB, I manage enrollment schoolwide, FTE, data and accountability, technology, contract negotiations, and a \$12 million annual budget for the school as a whole. I also work on master scheduling and hiring. Florida is one of the lowest funded states in the United States for public education, which led my principal and I to get involved with development work and have raised over \$5 million in private funding to create the best educational environment possible for our students.

The accidental educator: I grew up in India and attended a private school Pre-K-12; I came to the U.S. to earn my Masters in Business Administration and a Masters of Science in Economics at Lehigh University. On graduation, my wife and I agreed to relocate to wherever the first job took us; she got hired first, and we moved to Florida. I started volunteering at Polk Avenue Elementary and felt so at home in a school setting that I accepted the first available teaching position at PAE. I taught from 2005-2008, ran an after-school program for over 100 students, and my peers voted for me to be the 'Teacher of the Year' in 2008. I was off to a good start.

At this point, Lake Wales Charter Schools (LWCS) had four elementary schools, and one high school, but no middle school. LWCS desired to have a seamless K-12 system; a small group of educators made that vision a reality. Our work came to fruition when we opened our doors in 2008 and as the co-founder of Bok Academy, I began to implement our shared vision to create a middle school where all students can thrive, regardless of socio-economic background or race; intentionally blending the best of private and public-school education in a community with limited middle school opportunities. Bok Academy has been an 'A' school every year since we opened. I believe our foundational work played a key role in the making of Bok Academy as we know it today, and I was deeply involved with not just building the culture, but also the school climate including discipline, curriculum, and facilities. We took a student-centered approach, focused on developing active learners with empathy, and a commitment to building a life of purpose.

While Bok was thriving, Lake Wales High School (LWHS) data at the time, showed a fractured culture, high discipline issues, a 70% graduation rate, limited advanced course offerings, only 46% of the graduating class went on to college, and the minority graduation rate was in the low 50 percent range. In 2011, our Superintendent asked my Principal and I to move to the high school.

As we started working on the redesign of LWHS, we looked at education through the lens of architecture and design at a much deeper level than we did at Bok Academy. Designing a school from the ground up is quite different from taking an existing school and transforming it. The scale was vastly different and there were many more moving parts. Over the next few years, I took a data driven approach to look at each aspect of the high school and I led or co-led the key initiatives mentioned below and detailed on the attached document, Chronicle of Initiatives, that will offer some insight into how my experience will be of value to Lake Wales Charter as a whole:

- Raised over \$5 million in private funding
- Strategic planning: managing for growth at Bok and LWHS
- Worked with our booster club and Athletics Director to improve sports facilities
- Supported our Band program by optimizing resource allocation to benefit the program
- Implemented a 1:1 technology program and the E-Rate process
- Co-Led the school to increase the graduation rate from 70% to 94% and narrow the achievement gap for all student subgroups including students with special needs
- Helped Increase the percentage of graduates with post-secondary plans from 46% to 85%
- Co-authored a \$250,000 federal grant for increasing high school graduation rates, provided PD to various schools in Florida by presenting at the charter conferences, and co-led workshops on campus
- Coordinated the National Equity Lab partnership and implementation at LWHS
- Founded the IB Diploma Program at Lake Wales High School
- Led the school through the first IB five-year review resulting in no *Matters to be Addressed* (MATB) and 11 commendations
- Currently assisting JHW with their Primary Years Program IB application

I may have started out as an *Accidental Educator*, but I am fortunate enough to have found a pathway to meaningful work that enabled me to lead a life of purpose right here in Polk County. I was offered the Chief Financial Officer position at LWCS, and a Principalship outside of LWCS at a private international school in Atlanta – I declined both because I was driven by the work I was involved with at the time and felt there was more to do in my current role. One position meant my work with students and teachers would take a back seat, and the other meant I will no longer be vested in the system that allowed me to become the person I am today. To be clear, I did not go looking for the job in Atlanta -- it just evolved. Sometimes, the grass looks greener on the other side and after much deep thought, I decided to stay at Lake Wales High School.

One may ask, if I am ready to be Superintendent at Lake Wales Charter Schools. As this search committee works to make that determination, I want you to know that I am drawn to this position, in large part, because over the past decade, I have worked with each of the seven schools to enhance their operation in one way or another, while being true to my primary responsibility at LWHS. The notion of being able to work with all seven schools on a full-time basis is intriguing to me. While I have never served as a Superintendent, for 16 years, I have given LWCS my very best, and have done everything in my power to continuously improve our collective effort across this system. I am confident my experience as an elementary school teacher, as well as a startup charter middle and conversion high school administrator, gives me deep insight on how to take this system to next level, while supporting our schools and the Lake Wales community.

Over the past few years, I have had the privilege of helping students that I taught in kindergarten or 4th grade, grow into Lake Wales High School graduates, with some of them earning an IB Diploma; I place a high value on building those relationships. As Superintendent, I will be able to continue working for all students and leverage the relationships I have developed in the Lake Wales community to design an atmosphere where all students in the Lake Wales community can thrive.

I am a strategic planner and not only have a deep understanding of the FTE process, development work, grants, and budgets, but am also adept at optimizing limited resources, cost cutting, and negotiating contracts which have led to significant cost savings. I have supported ESE education by making sure resources and supplemental funding is available to them, and have supported all teachers by ensuring they have access to every resource needed to support their work. Over the years, I have gained experience navigating complicated situations with staff, students, and parents. I am passionate about supporting staff and developing best practices within the schools I have worked at.

I also served on the board of Florida Association of IB Schools (FLIBS) in several capacities including the President (chairman of the board). During my tenure, Pam Stewart, the former Florida Commissioner of Education, and Jacob Olivia, the current Chancellor, also served on the board. I have a good working relationship with both, and believe they can help pave the way for me to develop a wider network in Tallahassee. I continue to serve on the executive board of FLIBS, and in fact, we just hired Pam Stewart to serve as the next Executive Director of FLIBS, and continue her work with us.

Anuj Saran

In order to give you a deeper understanding of the different facets of my work, I am being very intentional with my three reference letters. My first letter is from Henry McCance, the largest benefactor of LWCS, that will hopefully show you, that for me, development work is not about getting a one-time donation, but about delivering on the outcomes that motivated the donor in the first place, and building long term relationships for the greater good of the community. For my second letter, I requested Donna Dunson, because I have worked for and with her, for the entirety of my time at LWCS; no other person can give you a more accurate picture of the scope of my work. Lastly, since the single most important compass that helps me navigate my work, is improving student outcomes, the third letter is from Estefany Arenas; a product of LWCS, who also returned to teach at LWHS for two years.

I believe the breadth and depth of my experience at all three levels of K-12 education will be an asset to this organization, and given the opportunity, I am ready to collaborate with all stakeholders and lead Lake Wales Charter Schools.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anuj Saran', written in a cursive style.

Anuj Saran

Chronicle of Initiatives

Development Work:

Building trust and relationships: While at Polk Avenue Elementary School, a donor paid for the kindergarten-support program for four of the schools and had been doing so for several years. She wanted to know if the reading test scores in 3rd grade showed that the program was effective; the donor and Superintendent Wright asked that I work on this. After analyzing the data, I concluded that her investment till that point did not produce higher reading test scores on the 3rd Grade FCAT exams. I was concerned about a potential loss of donor funding, so I asked the then Superintendent, Dr. Wright, for his counsel. He encouraged me to submit my report as is and to not worry about the possible loss of funding. Fortunately, I also noticed that there was significant improvement in 1st grade progress monitoring scores for this subgroup, but the gains diminished by the end of 2nd grade. After presenting my findings, the donor concluded that it will be best to add a paraprofessional for K-3 and increased the funding to add a paraprofessional.

First impressions count: On a winter morning in 2010 at Bok Academy Middle School, a gentleman walked in and asked the front office to see an administrator for a tour of the school and answer some questions. I gave him a tour for over an hour. As we walked back to my office, he said he had one last question – “If I gave you a check for \$10,000 right now, what would you do with it?”. I was somewhat in disbelief, but said I would buy iPads for students. A few months later, he gave another \$50,000 for more iPads. The donor from Polk Avenue had recommended that he come see our work at Bok Academy to see if he wants to support it.

The same donor from Polk Avenue had also given a donation of over \$150,000 back in 2008, and I used that donation to purchase MacBooks for all staff at Bok and some student laptops.

Scale and scope: When we moved to the high school, we took Mr. McCance’s counsel and explained what we wanted to do to transform the school’s culture and educational outcomes. He encouraged us to be creative and map out a plan assuming the funding was there. That initial gift of \$10,000 turned into a \$1.2 million gift, followed by many more gifts year after year -- over \$4 million at this point for the high school alone.

Makers movement and the design, innovation and technology academy: A few years ago, our data indicated that our most at-risk students were a sub-population of white males who did not connect with any of the current offerings. I did an in-depth analysis of the data and wrote a proposal for a potential new donor. Upon request, I am happy to share a document titled “Bepler – Development Work Sample”, to give a glimpse of my data driven approach. I was introduced to the Makers Movement at one of the Project Zero Workshops, and spent some time touring the maker space at Atlanta International School as well as at the Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco. We knew we needed a hands-on approach and needed to offer technical arts classes that would draw more students in. This effort led to a new donor funding the academy for all the equipment and supplies, as well as a teaching position for two years.

Strategic Planning: I planned for the expansion of Bok Academy from 375 to 600 students and more recently, led the high school’s growth from less than 1200 students to about 1570 students. This includes a needs/use analysis of current and planned spaces, planning for infrastructure, classrooms, hiring teachers, planning for professional development, technology for both students and staff, textbooks, and managing key ratios to maintain the academic rigor and student achievement.

IB Diploma Program: I led the school through the IB authorization process and started the IB Diploma program in 2012 with about 42 students, as a school within a school program. Today, we have over 300 students, grades 9-12 in the IB program. Over 50% of our students are on free and reduced lunch and many have jobs after school hours while pursuing the full diploma. Despite these constraints, for the first time in 2017-18, our IB Diploma rate crossed the 75% mark and was 11 points higher than the U.S. average of 66%. The IB Diploma rate for the

past couple years has been in the 81-83% range. The program has graduated three Gates Millennium scholars, one QuestBridge scholar, and year after year, many of these students earn substantial scholarships at various universities. I also led the first IB 5-year review; we had no matters to be addressed (MATB) and eleven commendations; this is rare for most schools.

1:1 Computing Initiative: With the infusion of \$1.2 million in private funding, I designed and implemented a 1:1 computing program for our students and have continued to manage it over the years. Charter schools operate under a public school district that acts as a sponsor and at the time, the school district provided LWHS with a 10mb internet connection, which was grossly inadequate for 1:1 computing for over 1200 students and teachers. With my Superintendent's permission and donor funding, I moved all six of our schools from the county to our own independent system. This required applying for E-Rate (USAC) funds in a timely manner, hiring a vendor to build the network, test, and launch a week prior to school starting. Since then, we have benefitted from over \$2.4 million in E-Rate funds -- the high school alone has a 1 gigabyte network.

Redesign of Lake Wales High School: Through data driven instructional practices and working on the culture and climate, I co-led the school from a 70% graduation rate in 2011-12 to a 94% graduation rate in 2018-19, and have maintained it even through the pandemic. Further, 85% of graduates now have a post-secondary plan as compared to 46% in 2011-12. I collaborated with all internal stakeholders and worked to increase the number of professional school and college counselors from three to six. I also write the school improvement and the school accountability plan; both require understanding the different components of the school grade formula and capacity for growth, collaborative planning, tweaking the curriculum, planning for professional development, and providing the needed resources to teachers. This effort has helped move the school to a grade of B for three consecutive years now.

Data Driven Instruction & Decision Making: I have a strong background in data analysis and good Excel skills. At the request of the Superintendent, I head the data driven instruction team for all seven schools composed of school administrators, and their accountability team members. In this role, I have collaborated with key players to develop common processes and approaches for expanded collaboration among the seven schools and a common set of metrics. I also led the team through the Data Wise EdX course from Harvard university, and we began to implement standards-based grading in some subjects at all of our schools and data analysis protocols. Some of this work has come to a halt due to Covid but soon, we will pick up where we left off.

Khan Academy and MAPS Accelerator: A key LWHS donor offered to fund a partnership with the high school and Khan Academy. The donor made the funding contingent upon including Lake Wales Charter schools in the new Khan Academy District and the MAPS accelerator initiative. I was asked to take the lead for the K-12 implementation; LWCS was one of 11 school districts nationally to participate in this initiative. Subsequently, I have led the implementation of Khan Academy district for all seven schools since 2020. I work closely with the school administrators and their team to oversee the implementation.

Keystone Federal Grant: Coauthored the Keystone grant that resulted in a \$250,000 federal grant to disseminate best practices for increasing high school graduation rates. Over the course of the grant, designed and provided professional development to school leaders in the state of Florida, conducted workshops at the Annual Charter Schools Conference, and simultaneously refined the implementation of the Keystone approach at Lake Wales High School. More information can be found at <http://keystoneproject.net/>.

National Equity Lab Initiative: Co-led an initiative that was sparked by a donor making a \$1 million contribution to the National Equity Lab in return for Lake Wales High School being one of 75 schools they partner with to offer online college credit bearing courses from universities such as Wesleyan, Harvard, Yale, Howard,

and Cornell. This is the first year of implementation and I work closely with the two site coordinators for the program.

Planning For Growth Of The Arts And Athletics: Over the years, I have worked to strategically prioritize funding. Over the last 18 months, based on feedback from the athletic director and band director, I committed to invest over \$400,000 for resodding the practice field, resurfacing the track, resodding the baseball field, football locker room, weight room equipment, band locker, band tower, and instruments – this is over and above their \$475,000 annual budget. In addition to several donations for the arts program and general fund allocations, I also worked with our booster club and this year alone, the booster club has donated \$50,000 towards these athletic related projects. Many of these projects are currently underway and will be completed over the next few months.

Financial Analysis and Assistance: I am fortunate to have earned the trust of the leadership team of our system, and have a gift for navigating budget cuts and building school budgets aligned to strategic plans. One school was facing a significant budget cut, so the then Superintendent and current Principal reached out to me for assistance. Together, we trimmed approximately 10% off the budget while finding alternative placement for staff.

PYP Program: As the President of Florida Association of IB Schools, I gained a deeper understanding of the PYP (elementary school) and MYP (middle school) programs and shared the same with the leadership teams at our elementary and middle schools. Janie Howard Wilson is currently in the application phase and I have the privilege of working with their team.

AdvancED Accreditation: Co-led the AdvancED accreditation renewal process for LWHS.

SAC/Highlander Booster Club/Student Voice: As a school leader, I work closely with our School Advisory Council (SAC). One of the key factors that has helped us manage change and growth has been the opportunity to present our plans and progress to SAC members and get their feedback; their input has been invaluable. Another way we promote student-driven change is by getting student feedback through surveys. This feedback factors into our decision making and provides a voice to students. Lastly, as a school with over 25 sports teams, I also work with the Highlander booster club to support various programs for our athletes.

ANUJ SARAN

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following workshops were pivotal in informing my thinking and developing my thought processes.

Design Thinking & Art of Innovation
Stanford University

Design Thinking
Harvard University

Project Zero—Thinking Routines,
Artful Thinking, and Learning

Teach Like a Champion
Doug Lemon

SKILLS

School Leadership
Grant Writing
Culture & Climate
Development Work
Budget & Accounting
Data Analysis
Data Driven Instruction
Excel
Master Scheduling
Technology & Integration

OBJECTIVE

A passionate educational leader with aspirations to serve as the next Superintendent of Lake Wales Charter Schools. With 16 years experience in K-12 school management at both the primary and secondary level.

EXPERIENCE

Assistant Principal & Head of IB • Lake Wales High School

Lake Wales Charter School • 2011 - Present

- Co-raised over \$5 million in private funding (PAE, Bok, LWHS)
- Co-led the restructuring of LWHS leading to an increase in the federal graduation rate from 70% to 94%
- Co-Led the school from a 46% to an 85% college bound population
- Implemented, and manage a 1:1 technology program
- Co-Chaired a \$250,000 IHSGR grant – Project Keystone DOE grant for disseminating best practices for improving high school graduation rates
- Provide school wide instructional leadership
- Data driven analysis resulted in a donation and founding the Bepler Academy – laser printers, woodworking, repairing welding booths
- Strategic planning and budgetary finesse led to the implementation of the Pre-engineering academy at LWHS
- Managed two donations to support our band and orchestra
- Support athletic facilities and plan for improvements
- Head LWCS data committee for all seven schools
- Manage a budget of approx. \$12 million/year
- Successfully applied for and earned E-rate funding for all technology services for our seven schools; over \$2.4 million
- Managed the transition of all technology services from School Board to Lake Wales Charter Schools
- Implemented Clever and Khan Academy for all seven schools
- Founded an International Baccalaureate (IB) program
- President of the Diploma Program for Florida Association of IB World Schools (FLIBS) (2019; currently on executive board)

Cofounder & Assistant Principal • Bok Academy

Lake Wales Charter School • 2008 - 2011

- Co-Founded a start up charter middle school
- Designed and built the school from the ground up
- Provided instructional leadership and co-led the school to be an “A” school for three consecutive years
- Development work leading to over half a million dollars in donations

ANUJ SARAN

SKILLS

Curriculum Design
Professional Development
Relationship Building
Workshop Facilitation
Mentorship
Post Secondary Counseling
Student Intervention
Project Management

"Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline."

-Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

Teacher • Polk Avenue Elementary School

Lake Wales Charter School • 2005 - 2008

- Awarded "Teacher of the Year" award in 2008
- Data driven instruction: consistently looked at student data to plan and implement instruction with documented increase in student achievement
- Assisted school administration with the School Improvement plan
- Led school wide improvements such as increasing technology integration, and community outreach, by managing the 21st Century Grant for the after school program
- Conducted a student achievement study, identified learning gaps, and presented findings to a donor resulting in the school getting additional private funding
- Consistently worked with the lowest math students with demonstrated increase in student achievement

Instructor • East Stroudsburg University • 2003-2004

- Responsible for developing course work and teaching
- Developed a culture for teamwork and facilitated better group dynamics
- Promoted problem solving and built a framework for developing analytical skills

EDUCATION

Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA, 1999-2003

- Master's in Business Administration
- Master of Science in Economics

Delhi University, New Delhi, India, 1993-1996

- Bachelors of Arts (Honors)
- Economics Major

OTHER EXPERIENCES

Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA

- Teaching Assistant, August 1999-Jan 2003

Communication Today, Noida, India

- Assistant Manager Advertising, October 1998- August 1999

D.A. Enterprises, Ghaziabad, India

- Supervisor, May 1996- April 1997
- Assistant Manager, April 1997-October 1999

November 5, 2021

Dear Lake Wales Charter School Superintendent Search Committee,

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Anuj Saran to be the new Superintendent of Lake Wales Charter Schools.

I retired in Lake Wales in 2009, but I have visited Lake Wales for vacations every year since 1951. I am a philanthropist and have made supporting the Lake Wales Charter Schools one of my major causes, because I believe in the importance of giving Lake Wales children the finest education possible, thereby enhancing the quality and growth of the community where I have retired. I have gotten to know Anuj because I have been a major supporter of Bok Academy since 2009, and the Lake Wales High School since 2012. During that period, I have donated well over \$5 million to Bok Academy, Lake Wales High School, and the LWCS Foundation. Anuj was the Assistant Principal and “the right-hand man” of Donna Dunson, the Principal at Bok from 2008-2011, and at the high school from 2012-2022. I have been to dinner with Anuj and his wife Ambica at both his house and my house several times. I feel that I know Anuj well.

I am a 78-year-old man who graduated from Yale and Harvard Business School. I spent my entire career as a Partner, and then Managing Partner, of Greylock Partners, a national venture capital firm. Since 2004, I have been an active philanthropist, co-founding Cure Alzheimer’s Fund, serving as a trustee of the McCance Foundation, and serving on several other non-profit boards. In both my career as a venture capitalist, and my role as a philanthropist, I try to assess the leadership skills of the entrepreneurs or social entrepreneurs and try to fund “world class” talent. Anuj Saran is such a talent. He, along with Donna Dunson, is the major reason for my support of Bok, the high school, and the LWCS Foundation. He has excelled in both his academic and professional career. He has an outgoing, engaging personality which makes others want to listen to and connect with him. He has the highest integrity. He is humble. He is competitive and strives to be the best he can be. He has an

exceptional work ethic. He is passionate about his endeavors and succeeds in what he takes on.

For the last 16 years, he has given these talents to the education of the children of Lake Wales and to the betterment of the Lake Wales Charter School system.

In his first 3 years, he was a teacher at Polk Avenue Elementary School, where he was awarded “Teacher of the Year” in 2008, and consistently pushed data driven instruction which identified learning weaknesses and resulted in documented improvements in student achievements.

In the next 3 years, Anuj showed his ability to develop a successful start-up school at Bok Academy. He helped recruit and develop the initial teachers and staff, established the culture of excellence at a new school, and managed the financial affairs of this start-up. The success of Bok Academy was immediate, and it achieved an “A” rating from the state in its first year, which it has maintained up to today.

In his next 10 years, Anuj has demonstrated his ability to affect a major turnaround at Lake Wales High School. He and Donna Dunson moved from Bok Academy to be Assistant Principal and Principal at the high school, where the graduation rate was around 70%, disciplinary incidents were too high, moral of teachers and staff was low, and expectations for the students was modest. During the early years, Anuj played a major role in changing the culture and expectations of the school. He led the initiation of an International Baccalaureate program, one of only three in Polk County. He helped institute a dress code and reduced disciplinary issues. He helped execute a careful upgrade of the teachers and administrative staff and helped supervise significant new professional development programs for both. He led the implementation of a state-of-the-art internet network to enable 1:1 computing for 1600 students. He served as the chief financial officer for the school, preparing budgets, controlling expenses, and developing fiscal plans and strategic plans. He was knowledgeable of federal and state statutes and programs and made sure the high school complied with and maximized the benefits available to a charter school. Anuj’s efforts have directly resulted in significant improvements and achievements for the high school. Enrollment has grown from 1200 students to 1600 students. Graduation rates rose to 85%

by 2016, and to 95% by 2019-2020. Today over 90% of graduates have a post-secondary plan of college or military service, compared to 46% when Anuj arrived in 2012. In 2020, and again in 2021, US News and World Report recognized Lake Wales High School as a “Best High School in America”.

In addition to these significant internal accomplishments, Anuj has been an effective ambassador for the Lake Wales Charter School foundation and been an effective fund raiser with me, and another significant donor.

My philanthropic grants to the high school have focused on several important initiatives that Anuj has led. He has designed these priority projects, presented the potential impact for the students, and overseen their successful implementation.

My initial grant enabled this Title 1 school to offer every student the use of their personal iPad. Anuj designed a 1:1 computing program for the students. He supervised the implementation of a 1 gigabit network that replaced an inadequate 10mb internet network when he arrived. He also successfully led the application and earned E-rate funding for all technology services for all 7 Lake Wales Charter Schools, yielding over \$2 million.

Some of my other early grants enabled the establishment, success, and growth of an International Baccalaureate program at the high school. Anuj led that program which has grown from 42 students in the first year to 340 IB students today. The IB program required extra training and certification for IB teachers and extra textbooks for the IB students. Anuj manages the scheduling for this program and all other aspects of its successful implementation. As testimony to the high regard his peers have for him, in 2016 Anuj was invited to serve on the executive board of the Diploma Program for Florida Association of IB World Schools (FLIBS), and eventually served as President.

More recently, I have made grants to enable the Lake Wales Charter Schools to participate as one of only 11 school districts in the country to implement Kahn Academy District offering in its schools as an on-line supplement to the math curriculum. Anuj has led this project for all seven schools and monitored its use and progress.

This year, I introduced the high school to a new non-profit, the National Education Equity Lab, which offers for credit, college courses, from top universities to Title 1 high schools. Once again, Anuj is the point person for Lake Wales, which is one of only two high schools in Florida chosen to offer this innovative program to 40 students.

Throughout my 13-year journey as a donor to the Lake Wales Charter School Foundation, Anuj has been my primary contact. He has been an excellent steward of these funds, been extraordinary as an implementer, and insured that these initiatives have been successful and have maximum impact.

Finally, in my opinion, Anuj has shown an unusual loyalty and commitment to the Lake Wales Charter Schools and to the students in the Lake Wales community. A few years ago, Anuj went through a search process for the Head of the High School (Principal) of a private K-12 school in Atlanta. He was selected from over 30 applicants to be one of three finalists to be interviewed in Atlanta, and then he was offered the position as the school's first choice. Despite being offered a more senior title and higher compensation than his AP position at Lake Wales High School, Anuj turned the offer down. The process had validated that the education world valued his experience and accomplishments, but his love for the Lake Wales community and his belief in the Lake Wales Charter School future opportunities cemented his decision to stay here. This tells me that Anuj is a "national" candidate for the Superintendent job, with a 16-year proven "local" Lake Wales community involvement.

As a man who has demonstrated his commitment to educational excellence in Lake Wales, as a proven teacher and administrator at the elementary, middle and high school levels, as a proven successful fund raiser of grants and philanthropic funds, and as a superior fiscal, financial, and strategic planner, I believe Anuj Saran is uniquely qualified to be the next Superintendent of Lake Wales Charter School system. I recommend him without hesitation.

Sincerely,


Henry F. McCance



Creating a vibrant, internationally minded community where students are encouraged to seek a life of inquiry, reflection, and merit.

November 9, 2021

Letter of Recommendation for Anuj Saran

Anuj Saran is an extraordinary man and educator. I have known him for 16 years and during this time I have watched him pursue excellence and deliver excellence in every aspect of his work. I am at the end of my career in education and have written hundreds of letters of recommendations through the years; this letter is in a different category than most because of this man's character, integrity, intellectual acuity, and overall excellence.

I met Anuj when I hired his wife for a teaching position at Polk Avenue Elementary in Lake Wales, Florida; they had just finished their graduate degrees and had decided they would move on the first job offer. As it turned out, I hired Ambica and Anuj followed; the intent was that he would conduct his job search in the Tampa/Orlando area. He was headed to business or finance. Very quickly, I could see that this young man who had supported his wife in this move was highly skilled, so I asked him, if he would help with a couple of projects. While he was working on those projects, a kindergarten position opened. Subsequently, I asked Anuj, if he would be interested until he secured other opportunities; I was never thinking he might actually accept. I give this background so one understands the frame of reference for this accidental educator.

Anuj's performance as a kindergarten teacher was stellar; he had his students working ahead of grade level. He approached his class without expectations of what a student of that age could or could not do. That proved to be quite a lesson for all. He became an extraordinary elementary educator. While in that position, I would have him troubleshoot and tutor students who were behind in math; in each case he exceeded my expectations. He had a wonderful balance of the warm/strict approach; it was fun to watch his work with his students unfold in the best possible manner.

At that time, I was the principal of Polk Avenue, which is a charter school in Florida; the system was in the beginning stages of creating a startup middle school, which I was asked to run. This meant, I would be responsible for the writing of the charter, overseeing the construction, and designing the curriculum and instruction. I was excited about the possibility of this opportunity, but I knew I would need a key person to work with me to bring this about; Anuj Saran was the only person that I wanted to work with on this endeavor. His brief education experience would be valuable, but his background in business and his MBA would be critical in a successful implementation of this new school, Edward W. Bok Academy.

The IB program at LWHS recently had our IB 5 year review. The assessment report was extremely complimentary, and I quote, *"Based on the findings included in the report, the IB has not found any matters to be addressed. In addition, I hope you do not mind that we have shared the good practice we have found in your school internally across the IB to alert our colleagues to the expertise you have to offer."* It is very rare to receive such an assessment from IB.

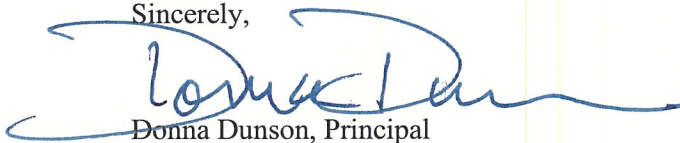
Quickly I realized that I could trust Anuj to grasp what needed to be done; he would do whatever needed to accomplish the goals. He will seek out best practice through primary or secondary sources and will become extremely well versed in any subject matter. Once he had a grasp of the task at hand, he would implement the idea, concept, or task with great efficiency; the final result would always be outstanding. We certainly are involved in strategic planning together and work together on many aspects of school operation, but I have turned many critical areas of LWHS operations completely over to him. I have not given any other Assistant Head this type of autonomy.

One other aspect of Anuj's role is to work with me on development; He has the trust of our benefactors and had helped navigate and cultivate these relationships over the last 15 years. We were able to garner over 6 million dollars to help advance our work over the past decade. Clearly, Anuj played a critical role in their trust of our work, his business background was a huge asset in this area of the work.

I hope this letter gives a chronological look at the working relationship I have with this man, and I hope it provides one with a sense of his stellar abilities; Anuj is remarkable. Throughout my career, I have had the good fortune to work with top notch professionals, but Anuj Saran is in a league of his own. When I look back on this decade, I am stunned by what he helped to bring about for Lake Wales Charter System; his reputation in this area is extremely high and his peers see him as a mentor and key leader of this work. Anuj is not driven by external forces; he is driven by a keen desire to do his best no matter the task or the barriers that are in his way. He is the best educational partner I have ever worked with in the different schools and systems that I have worked: exclusive private, international, public and now charter. By any measure he is remarkable. I know he has had numerous opportunities to move into business and finance, but after being in that elementary school and working on behalf of children who do not have many chances in life, he was hooked on this work. It was the charter's good fortune, and it was my good fortune that he took this circuitous route to education.

Anuj is perfectly positioned to begin the work as Superintendent from day one; he knows the system and LWCS would flourish under his direction. He is uniquely qualified to take this educational endeavor to the next level. I will end this letter the way I began it; Anuj Saran is an extraordinary educator and person. It is with the highest respect for him that I write this letter of recommendation.

Sincerely,



Donna Dunson, Principal
Lake Wales High School

Dear Lakes Wales Charter Schools Superintendent Search Committee:

As a former Lake Wales High School International Baccalaureate (IB) graduate, and Lake Wales High School teacher, it is an honor to write about what makes Mr. Saran an exceptional candidate for superintendent of Lake Wales Charter Schools.

I was born in Mexico and had recently immigrated to the United States with my family when Mr. Saran encouraged me to apply to the LWHS IB program. My English was still developing, I struggled academically, and frankly, I never saw myself as intelligent. Mr. Saran, nevertheless, pulled me aside one afternoon to tell me that I was good enough and – like everyone else – I could accomplish great things if I worked hard. Additionally, unlike other IB directors in the county at the time, Mr. Saran accepted anyone wanting to join the program— no exam and flexible GPA requirements. His persistence, encouragement, and honesty about my potential and the potential of kids like myself ultimately pushed me to join the program in the fall of 2011.

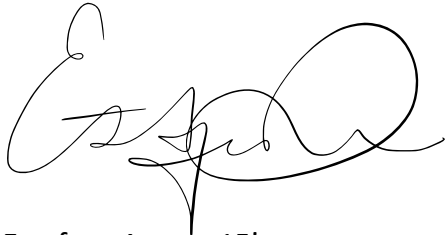
In my 14 years of experience in education as a student, mentor, and educator, I have yet to meet anyone as genuinely committed to mastering the art of leadership and mentorship in the way Mr. Saran is. He's provided me, and continues to provide students, with something that I believe sets him apart from anyone I have ever worked with—and that is a chance. Via his reassurance, I gained the confidence to join a program that gave me academic liberty— one that encouraged my mistakes as much as it did my successes. He presented me with a chance to grow and develop my understanding of concepts via deep discussion, collaborative assignments, and assessments tailored towards what I could offer, not just what I could presumably remember. I went from being behind due to cultural and language barriers to being included and academically inspired. Mr. Saran's empowerment changed the way I knew education and, ultimately, changed how I perceived my ability for the rest of my collegiate career.

In 2015, I graduated as the valedictorian of Lake Wales High School, and I credit Mr. Saran for making that a possibility for me. He taught me how to believe in myself and the value of hard work. Moreover, I went back to Lake Wales High School to teach for two years because I wanted to give students what he gave me: a chance to discover their potential. Today, I serve as an ambassador to the United States in Spain via a Fulbright Scholarship because 14 years ago, Mr. Saran told me no dream was too big.

For Mr. Saran, doing this type of work is never a part of the job but rather a part of who he is, his character. Despite graduating over six years ago, Mr. Saran has remained an advocate of my success. He has always picked up the phone when I have called, read my college essays when I could not make it to the writing center, helped me edit my resume more times than I would like to admit, and has never failed to remind me that when I am down, there are always ways to get back up.

My life is one I never even dreamt of possible before that afternoon conversation with Mr. Saran. He believed in my strength when the odds stacked against me, and for that, I will always be grateful.

Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss anything further. I would be happy to expand on my testimonial.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Estefany Arenas', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Estefany Arenas 15'
earenas@stetson.edu
(863) 605-0951

State of Florida Department of Education

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE

This Certifies That

ANUJ SARAN

*Has satisfactorily completed all requirements of Florida Statutes and
State Board of Education Rules for the coverages or endorsements listed below:*

PROFESSIONAL
PROFESSIONAL

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER
LANGUAGES
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

ENDORSEMENT
GRADES K-6

07/01/2013 - 06/30/2023
07/01/2013 - 06/30/2023

Department of Education Number 996540

Hershel Lyons
Chancellor for Public Schools

37349

Pam Stewart
Commissioner of Education

Issued: February 16, 2018





Student No: [REDACTED] Date of Birth: 26-SEP-1974

Date Issued: 25-FEB-2004

Page: 1

Record of: Anuj Saran

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Issued To: Anuj Saran

Course Level: Graduate
Only Admit: 1999 Fall Semester

Current Program

College : Business & Economics
Major : Business Economics
Major : Economics

Degree Awarded : Master of Business Admin 03-JUN-2001

Ehrs: 38.00 GPA-Hrs: 38.00 Pts: 143.30 GPA: 3.77
Major : Business Administration

Degree Awarded : Master of Science 12-JAN-2003

Ehrs: 30.00 GPA-Hrs: 30.00 Pts: 96.90 GPA: 3.23
Major : Economics

SUBJ NO.	COURSE TITLE	CRED	GRD	PTS	R
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INSTITUTION CREDIT:

1999 Fall Semester

Business & Economics

MBA 401	INTRO TO ORGAN & ENVRNMT	1.00	C+	2.30	
MBA 403	MANAGING INFORMATION	4.00	A	16.00	
MBA 404	MANAGING PROD & SERVICES	4.00	A	16.00	
Ehrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 9.00 Pts: 34.30 GPA: 3.81					

2000 Spring Semester

Business & Economics

GBUS 461	ADV & PROMOTION MGT	3.00	A	12.00	
GECO 403	MONEY BANK&MACRO ANALYS	3.00	B+	9.90	
MBA 405	MANAGING PEOPLE	4.00	A	16.00	
Ehrs: 10.00 GPA-Hrs: 10.00 Pts: 37.90 GPA: 3.79					

2000 Summer Session

Business & Economics

GBUS 492	Legal Asp of Mng Peop,Prod,Ser	1.00	*B	3.00	
GBUS 492	Price Productivity Improvement	1.00	A	4.00	
GBUS 492	Enhancing Supplier Cost Perf	1.00	A	4.00	
Ehrs: 3.00 GPA-Hrs: 3.00 Pts: 11.00 GPA: 3.66					

2000 Fall Semester

Business & Economics

GBUS 450	STRATEGIC SUPPLY MGT	3.00	A	12.00	
GBUS 464	INDUSTRL MKT & SALES MGT	3.00	A-	11.10	

***** CONTINUED ON NEXT COLUMN *****

SUBJ NO.	COURSE TITLE	CRED	GRD	PTS	R
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Institution Information continued:

GBUS 492	E-BUSINESS	3.00	A	12.00	
Ehrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 9.00 Pts: 35.10 GPA: 3.90					

2001 Spring Semester

Business & Economics

GBUS 453	Transportation/Logistics Mgt	3.00	A	12.00	
MBA 402	MANAGING FIN RESOURCES	4.00	B	12.00	
MBA 406	INTEGRATIVE EXPERIENCE	1.00	A	4.00	
Ehrs: 8.00 GPA-Hrs: 8.00 Pts: 28.00 GPA: 3.50					

2001 Fall Semester

Business & Economics

GECO 402	MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS	3.00	A-	11.10	
GECO 412	Mathematical Economics	3.00	B-	8.10	
GECO 417	ADV MACROECO ANALYSIS	3.00	B	9.00	
Ehrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 9.00 Pts: 28.20 GPA: 3.13					

2002 Spring Semester

Business & Economics

GECO 413	ADV MICROECO ANALYSIS	3.00	B+	9.90	
GECO 415	ECONOMETRICS I	3.00	B	9.00	
GECO 492	Fed Watchng&Forcst:BusnsCycle	3.00	B+	9.90	
Ehrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 9.00 Pts: 28.80 GPA: 3.20					

2002 Summer Session

Business & Economics

GECO 463	TOPICS IN GAME THEORY	3.00	B-	8.10	
Ehrs: 3.00 GPA-Hrs: 3.00 Pts: 8.10 GPA: 2.70					

2002 Fall Semester

Business & Economics

GECO 440	LABOR ECONOMICS	3.00	B+	9.90	
GECO 492	Community Growth	3.00	A	12.00	
GECO 492	Real Option&Investmnt Strategy	3.00	B+	9.90	
Ehrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 9.00 Pts: 31.80 GPA: 3.53					

***** CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 *****

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LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

TRANSCRIPT KEY

ACCREDITATION

Lehigh University is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Specialized programs are accredited by various governing bodies.

CALENDAR

Early semester. Fall and Spring terms are 70 days of instruction and a 9 day final examination period. Summer term consists of two six week terms and one twelve week term.

UNDERGRADUATE GRADES

GRADE	INTERPRETATION	QUALITY POINTS PER SEMESTER HOUR
A	Excellent	4.0
A-		3.7
B+		3.3
B	Good	3.0
B-		2.7
C+	Competent	2.3
C		2.0
C-	Level of Proficiency for prerequisite	1.7
D+	Passing	1.3
D		1.0
D-		0.7
F	Failing	0.0
WF	Withdrawal beyond deadline and/or With failing performance -- included in GPA	
P	Passing -- assigned in pass/fail courses	
CR	Credit earned toward graduation	
N	Incomplete	
X	Absent from final examination	
Z	Absent from final examination and Incomplete	
AU	Audit	

Withdrawal -- after drop/add and up to 11 weeks of semester
Withdrawn with passing performance at time of withdrawal
Not reported
Indicates the grade and credit related to the marked course are included in GPA, but not in credit hours earned.
Indicates that the marked course has a grade assigned that was incomplete and a grade assigned later.

When a course is repeated (E - exclude from GPA and hours earned or I - include in GPA and hours earned) the student will receive credit toward the degree only once. The final grade received is used in cumulative grade point average calculation. E indicates the grade is excluded from term and cumulative grade point averages

A grade preceded by an N, X, or Z, e.g. NC-, XF or ZB indicates the lowest possible grade a student may receive after the indicated work is completed. A grade preceded by an asterisk * e.g. *F, *A- indicates the course has been completed and the notation is the final grade assigned.

Grade point averages are calculated by dividing quality points by GPA hours attempted.

Only Lehigh University courses, courses taken through the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC), of which Lehigh is a member, are used in computing the cumulative grade point average.

ALLN -- De Sales University
CECR -- Cedar Crest College
LAF -- Lafayette College
MORV -- Moravian College
MUHL -- Muhlenberg College

Transfer credits from other institutions are shown at the start of the transcript and are defined by the term in which Lehigh accepted the credit and the name of the other institution. Grades from all other institutions are not included in cumulative grade point averages and are designated with a TR grade.

GRADUATE GRADES

Course grades are defined as for undergraduates except that no grade lower than a C may be counted toward a graduate degree.

COURSE NUMBERING

0 - 99 Undergraduate courses, primarily for undergraduates
100 - 199 Undergraduate courses, open to freshmen by petition
200 - 299 Advanced undergraduate course
300 - 399 Advanced undergraduate courses, open to graduates
400 - 499 Courses open to graduate students only, and undergraduates by petition

CONDITIONS FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts are sent only upon written request of the student. Transcripts are forwarded with the understanding that they will not be released to third parties. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 specifies that written consent of the student is necessary before this information may be released. If you are unable to comply with this condition, please return this material.

Release Notes: Lehigh University does not issue partial transcripts nor does the University reproduce transcripts of academic work completed at secondary schools or other post secondary institutions.

Transcript Authenticity

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Office of the Registrar
27 MEMORIAL DRIVE WEST
BETHLEHEM, PA 18015-3090

University Phone Number: (610) 758-3000
Office of the Registrar Phone: (610) 758-3200
Office of the Registrar FAX number: (610) 758-3198

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Student No: [REDACTED] Date of Birth: 26-SEP-1974

Date Issued: 25-FEB-2004

Record of: Anuj Saran

Page: 2

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Level: Graduate

***** TRANSCRIPT TOTALS *****

	Earned Hrs	GPA Hrs	Points	GPA
TOTAL INSTITUTION	69.00	69.00	243.20	3.52
TOTAL TRANSFER	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OVERALL	69.00	69.00	243.20	3.52

***** END OF TRANSCRIPT *****



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IN RED, GREEN AND BLUE.
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CHEMICAL REACTIVE PAPER AND HAS AN ARTIFICIAL WATERMARK ON
REVERSE SIDE - HOLD AT ANGLE TO VIEW.

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AU Audit
W Withdrawal -- after drop/add and up to 11 weeks of semester
WP Withdrawn with passing performance at time of withdrawal
NR Not reported
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