

Letter of Interest for Florida Commissioner of Education

To Who it May Concern:

I am applying for the position of Florida Commissioner of Education because I have the personal qualities, professional attributes and desire to help the state of Florida's pre-K-20 education system continue on its path to world-class excellence.

As a school district administrator in three states over the past 10 years, I have gained significant experience and insight into the many challenges of public education. I have seen these policies and practices which help to improve student achievement and those that do not. As a school district superintendent in Illinois and Florida, I have led each district to significantly improve student achievement and financial stability.

My experience as a school superintendent in Florida over the past 4 years has been excellent preparation for the position of Commissioner. I have been able to work with numerous state legislators from the southwest Florida area concerning a variety of local and state education issues. I also have direct experience with the many federal and state initiatives being implemented throughout the Florida educational system at this time.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dennis L. Thompson



**Application for the Position of
The Commissioner of Education**

Name: Thompson Dennis Louis **Date:** 27 May 2011
Last First Middle

Address: 7120 Lemuria Circle #504 Naples FL 34109 **E-mail:** see resume
Street City State Zip

Phone: (931)-980-2043 **Fax #:**
Home Business Cell

EDUCATIONAL RECORD

| Name & Location of Institution Attended | Year(s) | Degree | Major(s) | Minor(s) |
|--|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| U.S. Military Academy West Point, N.Y. | 1972-76 | B.S. | Public Affairs | Engineering |
| University of Texas at Austin Austin, Texas | 1983-85 | M.Ed | Educational Psychology | |
| Austin Peay State University Clarksville, TN | 1999-2001 | Ed.S | Education Administration | |
| Tennessee State University Nashville, TN | 2001-03 | Ed.D | Education Administration | |
| | | | | |

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

(Indicate relevant leadership responsibilities)

American Association of School Administrators

Florida Association of School Administrators

Education Foundation of Collier County

EXPERIENCE

(List in consecutive order beginning with the next most recent position following the position listed on page 1.)

| Dates | Position/Institution/Location | Supervisor's Name & Title | Supervisor's Phone |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| To: April 2011 | Superintendent, Collier County Schools | Ms. Julie Sprague | (Business) (239)-377-0212 |
| From: Aug 2007 | Naples, FL | Board Chair | (Home) |
| Reason for leaving (please be specific): Contract not renewed | | | |
| To: Aug 2007 | Superintendent, Rockford Schools | Mrs. Nancy Kalchbrenner | (Business) |
| From: May 2004 | Rockford, IL | Board Chair | (Home) |
| Reason for leaving (please be specific): Accepted position as Superintendent of Collier County Schools | | | |
| To: May 2004 | K-12 Curriculum Director | Dr. Sandra Johnson | (Business) |
| From: Aug 2001 | Nashville Public Schools | Chief Academic Officer | (Home) |
| Reason for leaving (please be specific): Accepted position as Superintendent of Rockford Schools | | | |
| To: Aug 2001 | Middle School Counselor | Mr. Ken Hudson | (Business) |
| From: Jan 2000 | Clarksville, Tn | Principal | (Home) |
| Reason for leaving (please be specific): Accepted position as Curriculum Director in Nashville | | | |

REFERENCES

(Names of four persons who can discuss your experience and qualifications in detail.)

| Name | Official Position | Phone Number |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Ms. Mary Ann Gemmill | Chief Administrative Officer , Collier Schools | Business (239)-377-0203 |
| | | Home |
| | | Cell (615)-417-7554 |
| Mrs. Martha Hayes | Chief Instructional Officer, Collier Schools | Business (239)-377-0201 |
| | | Home |
| | | Cell (239)-431-5723 |
| Mrs. Susan McManus | President, Education Foundation of Collier County | Business (239)-687-1378 |
| | | Home |
| | | Cell |
| Dr. Don Pemberton | Director, Lastinger Center for Learning College of Education University of Florida | Business (352)-273-4108 |
| | | Home |
| | | Cell (352)-317-1222 |

BACKGROUND CHECK AND INFORMATION

In addition to the following information, a thorough background check may be made at the option of the employer.

If "Yes" is selected in response to any question, attach additional sheets and clearly identify as Background Check and Information with a detailed explanation:

"YES" answers to the following questions will not necessarily result in denial of an offer of employment. The employer will consider all the circumstances, including the date and nature of events that have led to the actions described below. Your written explanation will assist the employer in determining your eligibility and suitability for an offer of employment.

1. Have you ever been convicted of, admitted committing, pleaded no contest, or are you awaiting trial for any crime (excluding only minor traffic violations that do not involve any allegations of alcohol, drugs or reckless driving) or have any civil charges previously or pending involving allegations of child abuse or spousal abuse? You must answer "YES" if true, even if the matter was later dismissed, deferred, reversed, or vacated. If you answer "YES" you must provide dates of the proceedings, the name and address of the court where the proceedings occurred, a statement of the accusation against you and the final disposition of the case(s).

No

Yes, attach a separate sheet for explanation

2. Have you ever been dismissed (fired) from any job, or resigned at the request of or pressure from your employer, or left employment while charges against you or an investigation of your behavior was pending or been refused tenure, reappointment or continuing contract from any employer? You must answer "YES" if true, even if the matter was later resolved with any form of settlement or severance agreement, regardless of its terms. If you answer "YES" you must provide the date of termination or resignation and other action concerning tenure reappointment or continuing contract denial and the name, address and telephone number of the employer(s) and a statement of the alleged reasons for termination or resignation.

No

Yes, attach a separate sheet for explanation

3. Have you ever had any license or certificate of any kind (teaching certificate or other professional license) revoked, suspended, or reprimanded, or have you in any way been sanctioned by or is any charge or complaint now pending against you before any licensing, certification or other regulatory agency or body, public or private? If you answer "YES" you must provide the dates of proceedings, name, address and telephone number of the agency or body where proceedings took place, a statement of the accusations against you, the final disposition and/or status of the charge or complaint.

No

Yes, attach a separate sheet for explanation

4. Are you now being investigated for any alleged misconduct or other alleged grounds for discipline by any licensing, certification or other regulatory body (teacher certification or otherwise) or by your current or any previous employer? If you answer "YES" you must provide the name, address and telephone number of the employer or licensing body and statement of the accusation against you.

No

Yes, attach a separate sheet for explanation

5. Have you ever been involved, or are you currently involved, or do you anticipate involvement in litigation either as the plaintiff/complainant or defendant/respondent?

No

Yes, attach a separate sheet for explanation

6. Have you ever filed a grievance/complaint of any kind against an employer?

No

Yes, attach a separate sheet for explanation

Explanations of Items 2,5,6

In August 2010 the School Board of Collier County voted 3-2 not to extend my contract for a fifth year. I have subsequently filed a lawsuit against the School Board for multiple violations of my employment contract as superintendent.

I have discussed this matter in detail with Dr. Ray and he is aware of the many background issues concerning the matter.

Dennis L. Thompson

VERIFICATION STATEMENT

(Please read carefully and sign the statement below.)

The information in the Application for Employment is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I have answered all questions to the best of my ability and I have not withheld any information that would unfavorably affect my application for employment. I acknowledge that any misrepresentation or omission of any fact in my application, resume, or any other materials, or during any interviews, may be the cause for my rejection from employment or may result in my subsequent dismissal if I am hired.

Signature

Date

APPLICANT'S FILE MUST INCLUDE:

- A letter of application stating personal qualifications, experiences, and reasons for interest in the position.
- A **signed** official application form **and** current resume.
- The names of four persons who will serve as references and can be contacted. *(Include name, title, and telephone numbers for both home and business and a cell phone number, if known.)*
- Several *current* letters of recommendation.

Please Direct **All** Inquiries,
Applications and Supporting Materials To:

Ray and Associates, Inc.

4403 First Avenue SE, Suite 407

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402-3221

319/393-3115 Phone

319/393-4931 Fax

E-mail: glr@rayassoc.com

Website: www.rayassoc.com

*DO NOT CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OR BOARD DIRECTLY.*

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

MAY 25, 2011

Neither the Florida Department of Education nor any members of Ray and Associates, Inc. discriminate on the basis of disability, race, religion, sex, national origin, or age in access to, employment in, or in the provision of any programs, benefits or activities.

Dr. Dennis L. Thompson
7120 Lemuria Circle # 504
Naples, Florida 34109
Home (931) 980-2043
Cell (931) 249-8848
Email- thompsondl@prodigy.net

Experience

Aug. 2007-
April 2011 Collier County Public Schools
Naples, FL

Superintendent of Schools

The district is comprised of 43,000 students in 51 schools and has 5,300 employees. The total district budget is about \$1 billion.

Major Accomplishments

- *Led the district to its highest academic grade ever, "A", from the Florida DOE in 2009 and 2010 and its highest graduation rate ever at 80.4%.
- *Established one of the largest financial reserves of any school district in the nation, while expanding student programs and laying off no employees.
- *Initiated a televised monthly program that was selected as Florida's "best school district public relations program" in 2009 and 2010.

May 2004-
Aug. 2007 Rockford Public Schools
Rockford, IL

Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent of the 3rd largest school district in Illinois. The District is comprised of 30,000 students and 3,900 employees in 52 Schools. The district operating budget is \$319 million.

Major Accomplishments

- *Brought the district from a budget deficit of \$50 million to a surplus of \$33 million in 3 years.
- *Led the district to the highest learning gains in the Rock River Valley in 2006 and 2007.
- *Increased the number of schools making AYP from 11 to 28.
- *Worked with the mayor and state legislature on community initiatives and state legislation to reduce chronic truancy.

Aug. 2001-
Apr. 2004

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
Nashville, TN

K-12 Director, Learning Support Services

Works with the Chief Instructional Officer on all aspects of curriculum and instruction for 127 schools in the 45th largest school system in the United States. This includes the development and implementation of academic content standards, interpretation and improvement of standardized achievement test results and school scheduling issues.

Major Accomplishments

- *Saved the district \$7.2 million in staffing costs through more effective school scheduling.
- *Trained over 3000 teachers in academic standards and data-driven decision making.
- *Operated the district's summer school program at 32 sites.
- *Opened 3 distance learning sites at middle and high schools.

Jan. 2000-
Aug. 2001

New Providence Middle School
Clarksville, TN

School Counselor

Provides guidance services for all pupils and supervises specialized programs to promote individual development in a middle school of 1000 students. Additional duties of Chairman, School Improvement Committee, Chairman, School Finance Committee, Co-chairman, Student Leadership Council Committee, and Assistant Technology Coordinator.

Aug. 1997-
June 1999

Self employed as an Organizational/Financial Consultant

Dec. 1993-
July 1997

United States Army
Ft. Campbell, KY

Director of Personnel and Community Activities

Responsible for providing and maintaining all human resource, educational, recreational, business operations, child development, equal opportunity and employment services programs for a major

Army installation supporting a total population of over 200,000 people. Direct responsibility for 762 civilian and 9 military personnel. Develop and manage annual budget of \$21 million. Some specific programs include:

HUMAN RESOURCES

- *Installation Risk Management Program
- *Civilian Training Development Program
- *Consumer Affairs Financial Assistance Program
- *Employment/Transition Services Counseling
- *Relocation Services
- *Family Advocacy Program
- *Drug & Alcohol Program/Urinalysis Testing

EDUCATIONAL

- *All installation college-level/vocational training programs (over 25,000 enrollments annually)
- *Basic Skills Education Program/GED completion
- *Military correspondence courses
- *Post library services

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- *5 clubs/restaurants
- *2 bowling centers
- *1 golf course
- *2 lodging facilities
- *Tour and Travel Center
- *Recycling Center
- *Outdoor equipment rental facility
- *Arts and Crafts Center

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- *2 large child care centers
- *School Age Services programs in 3 elementary schools
- *70 home-based child care providers

RECREATIONAL

- *Youth Activities Center
- *all youth sports programs
- *all soldier athletic programs
- *5 swimming pools/programs
- *6 gymnasiums
- *a sports stadium
- *all hunting/fishing activities
- *2 AutoCrafts shops
- *large recreation center

OTHER

- *Financial Services/Budget Office
- *Contracting and Purchasing Office
- *Marketing Section
- *Information Systems Management Division
- *Construction Engineering Section

July 1993-
Dec. 1993

U.S. Army
Ft. Campbell, KY

Division Civil-Military Operations Officer

Principal staff assistant to the Commanding General on all matters concerning civilian impact on military operations, as well as the political, economic and social effects of military operations on civilian personnel. Responsible for advising, assisting and making recommendations to the command on host nation support, local contracting, and resource availability. Represents the Division at local Chamber of Commerce and special interest group meetings.

June 1991-
June 1993

United States Army
Ft. Sheridan, IL

Senior Advisor for Professional Development

Responsible for providing professional development and assistance to 35 Army National Guard and Army Reserve units in the state of Illinois. Provide assistance in the areas of organizational leadership, tactical doctrine, training management and administration, logistics and maintenance procedures. Foster and maintain close working relations with senior levels of civil-military authority in the state of Illinois. Direct responsibility for 24 military and 2 civilian personnel. Develop and manage execution of \$150,000 annual operating budget.

Nov. 1990-
June 1991

United States Army
Ft. Polk, LA

Installation Training Manager

Responsible for planning, coordinating and resourcing all training events for a major Army installation of 14,000 military and 4,400 civilian personnel. Prepares the Commanding General's quarterly and annual training guidance; schedules and conducts required train-

ing briefings; manages regulations on individual and collective training; schedules all unit training evaluations and major installation events. Coordinates all resources required for unit training on Ft. Polk to include training areas, transportation, ammunition and professional development school allocations. Direct responsibility for 16 military and 4 civilian personnel.

June 1989-
Nov. 1990

United States Army
Ft. Polk, LA

Unit Operations Officer

Principal staff officer for operations, plans, organization and training in an armored infantry battalion comprised of 812 military personnel. Responsible for preparing and executing training programs, directives, orders, evaluations and planning and conducting training exercises. Develops and monitors training budget. Recommends and implements changes to unit organization. Prepares, coordinates and publishes operational orders. Direct responsibility for 35 military personnel. I served with this unit during Operation Just Cause in Panama (1989-1990).

June 1985-
June 1988

United States Army
U. S. Military Academy, West Point, NY

Assistant Professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership
Responsible for the instruction of 122 cadets each semester and for inspiring them to a career of service as a professional Army officer. Course Director for a college-level course in Leadership Counseling; Responsible for course design to include: goals and objectives, teaching strategies, materials and evaluation procedures. This course focused on teaching junior leaders the fundamentals of personal, performance, career and disciplinary counseling within an organizational environment. Also serves as an instructor in the General Psychology course, and advisor to the Professors of Leadership and Psychology on curriculum content. Undergraduate academic advisor to 110 cadets.

Education

B.S. United States Military Academy 1976
Concentration: Engineering and National Security/Public Affairs

M.Ed University of Texas at Austin 1985
Major: Educational Psychology

Ed. D Tennessee State University 2003
Major: Education Administration

Community Activities

Member, Rotary Club of Rockford
Member, Discovery Center/Burpee Museum Board of Directors
Member, Salvation Army Board of Directors
Member, Rockford Chamber of Commerce
Member, American Association of School Administrators
Member, Florida Association of School Administrators
Chairman, Leadership Council, Rockford Character Organization
Certified Evaluator, Southern Association of Schools
and Colleges
Board Member, Education Foundation of Collier County