

Dr. Erica Berger has been Inducted into the Prestigious Marquis Who's Who Biographical Registry

Dr. Erica Berger lends years of expertise to her work with Diamond Lake School District 76

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With her commitment to community engagement and her data-driven mindset, Dr. Berger works district wide supporting approximately 100 staff and 700 students.

PARK RIDGE, IL, October 23, 2024 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Erica Berger been inducted into Marquis Who's Who. As in all Marquis Who's Who biographical volumes, individuals profiled are selected on the basis of current reference value. Factors such as position, noteworthy accomplishments, visibility, and prominence in a field are all taken into account during the selection process.

Dr. Berger earned her Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where she conducted research in the university child development laboratory and consistently volunteered for their programs. She continued her collegiate studies by earning her Master of Arts in Teaching with the Elementary Education endorsement and her Certificate of Advanced Study in Curriculum and Instruction with the English as a Second Language endorsement from National Louis University (NLU). Dr. Berger concluded her studies at NLU by earning her Doctorate in Educational Leadership with the Principal endorsement. Through her experience and the inspiration of working with powerful women in educational leadership, Dr. Berger earned her Superintendent endorsement from Loyola University Chicago (LUC) this past April. During her studies with LUC, Dr. Berger participated in a summer study abroad program in Rome, Italy.

In January of 2006, Dr. Berger began her career in education as a paraprofessional and quickly moved to a third-grade teacher position, serving four years as a general education teacher and four years as a Sheltered English teacher for English learners. Working in a diverse community, she was committed to a growth mindset so that her students could meet and exceed grade level expectations and learning standards. Each year differentiated instructional practice resulted in 97% of her students exiting the English learners program by achieving standardized by assessing to determine this for proficiency. Dr. Berger continued to extend her excellence with English learners at the national level by participating in robust training for the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) framework at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. As a result, she coached staff to develop academic and linguistic learning plans to challenge English learners appropriately. Dr. Berger was also highly involved with the Parent Teacher Organization to give back to the community and

support family involvement within the district.

Dr. Berger began her educational leadership career as an Assistant Principal in 2013. With a professional goal to improve student behavior, she became a trained district leader in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and the CHAMPS model. Dr. Berger developed a Behavior Management Task Force by surveying staff and students to collect data indicating the pulse of classrooms and the climate and culture throughout the building. With goals, guidelines, roles, and responsibilities established and practiced by teacher leaders and student leaders, the group developed and implemented clear rules and expectations to establish behavioral norms. Through this process, she and her team conducted in-district professional development sessions to have a well-established system of support and significantly reduced bullying incidents. This greatly contributed to improvements in social-emotional learning and, in turn, resulted in academic growth for all students.

As a result of Dr. Berger's improvements in behavior management and social-emotional learning, in 2016, she brought her district work into the community by working in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Youth Services for students seeking social-emotional development and support. This after-school tutoring program provided students with a safe place to complete homework, engage with other students, and receive free social work services. Students who participated in this program showed significant gains in executive functioning and social-emotional management strategies.

In 2018, Dr. Berger was promoted to Principal. As Principal, she worked with the School Leadership Team to analyze assessment data, identify student instructional needs, and improve educational programs for Special Education students and English learners to achieve district and school goals and objectives. She worked with the District Leadership Team to assess community needs and develop an equity plan related to issues pertaining to diversity, values, and social justice and how these impacted student performance. In collaboration with the Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Berger also developed a curriculum and instruction plan for students by grade pertaining to understanding and awareness of the LGBTQ+ community. Through the strong relationships she built with all stakeholders, she conducted professional development sessions to establish equity for families and students.

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Dr. Berger joined Diamond Lake School District 76 (D76) in Mundelein, IL, in the fall of 2021 and, this

April, was promoted to the Director of Engagement & Growth. With her commitment to community engagement and her data-driven mindset, Dr. Berger works district wide supporting approximately 100 staff and 700 students. She collaborates with school leaders, district leaders, and teachers to promote student learning, establish Professional Learning Communities, and incorporate data-driven decision-making and performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of engagement and growth initiatives. Dr. Berger also serves as a handler for the district facilities dog, Polly. In 2023, she applied to Canines4Comfort (C4C), a charitable organization that provides psychiatric service, emotional support, first responder facility, and school facility dogs for individuals and organizations. To provide additional support to students, increase engagement, and enhance calming learning environments, Dr. Berger and Polly regularly visit PreK-8th grade classrooms. By incorporating Polly's support into classroom curriculum and instruction, students' motivation to learn has increased and classroom behavior has improved. D76 now serves as a model school district for C4C. Dr. Berger also organizes, leads, and participates in D76 community outreach events to enhance partnerships throughout Mundelein.

Dr. Berger's success story with D76 is rooted in her commitment to the district brand, SparkleOn. Trademarked by D76 Superintendent, Dr. Bhavna Sharma-Lewis, Service, Passion, Advocacy, Respect, Kindness, Love, Equity, Opportunity, Nurture are the district's core values that drive forward thinking decisions, leading without limitations, and making the impossible possible for students. The D76 vision of Embrace, Empower, Excel: Each Child, Each Day keeps Dr. Berger's work aligned to doing what is best for kids and creating learning paths that provide students and staff with experiences to LevelUp, LeanIn, and SparkleOn.

Driven to remain abreast of developments in the field of education, Dr. Berger belongs to multiple organizations, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators, and the Illinois Principals Association where she serves as a Principal, Lake Region Statewards Chair, and Lake Region Director (elect). Dr. Berger also has a track record of providing professional development sessions to the education community, such as the Illinois State Board of Education supports the GDPR (<https://eu.gdpr.org>). Division of English Learners statewide conference for Teachers Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students, the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools Raising Student Achievement Conference, and the Illinois Principals Association Women in Education Leading &

Dr. Berger's exceptional work has been recognized by the East Central Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children & Child Care Resource Service with the Friend of Young Children Award for her outstanding college research achievements and dedication to children. She received the Lake Region Illinois Principals Association Elementary Principal of the Year award for her commitment to creating a sense of community through different avenues. Dr. Berger also received a certificate of Patriotism from the Military Officers of World Wars from the Illinois Lake County Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States Hall for honoring, celebrating, and collaborating with community veterans and an honorable Making a Difference pin from the state of Illinois VFW.

Dr. Berger's dedication has provided her with a path to achievement. She credits her success to the support of her loving family and the opportunity to work in incredibly diverse communities with dedicated staff, students, and families. As she will soon reach her 20-year commitment to education, Dr. Berger intends to advance her role in educational leadership as Superintendent.

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Contact Information

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Marquis Who's Who Ventures LLC
Uniondale, NY
USA
Voice: 844-394-6946

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