

Dear Chairperson Rivera and members of the Blackstone Valley Prep Board,

With great enthusiasm, I write to submit my resume and application to be the next CEO and Superintendent of Blackstone Valley Prep. I joined BVP in 2015 after 15 years working with low performing traditional district schools because I believed in its mission of preparing every scholar for success in college and the world beyond, was inspired by its success, and felt personally energized by its commitment to intentional diversity and approach to integration. In the 7 years since, I have come to love this community of young learners and growing leaders, and have in turn, I hope, earned their trust to guide BVP into a new era.

A few years ago, I had the honor of presenting a diploma during a personal graduation ceremony to a young man at BVP High School who was terminally ill. That moment, looking around a room full of BVP educators who had done everything possible to help him achieve this goal and then created a unique way to celebrate it, is one of many that for me epitomizes the belief in “every scholar” that makes BVP special. My role in the background supporting teachers and school leaders meant I had not had the chance to spend time with him like his teachers and mentors. Nevertheless, I told him, “you don’t know me, but I know you.” And I did. I knew what he’d learned, where he’d shined, and what his teachers loved about him. I knew his story, just like I know the stories of countless BVP scholars and team members.

Those stories are what compel me to step into the daunting role of the superintendency. BVP is at an inflection point, where the transition of our founder coincides with significant organizational challenges around facilities, recovering from Covid’s devastating impacts on learning, and staffing shortages, as well as an ever-more-volatile national political and social context. I feel a deep responsibility to our people to provide the stability and dedication they deserve from a leader right now.

To truly prepare BVP for its next 15 years as a national model of success, there are even bigger questions to tackle. Many of us are invested in BVP’s mission because of an underlying belief that by helping to change the face of who goes to and succeeds in college we are contributing to the great project of making a more equitable and just world. That assumes college access is the real barrier to equity, a notion that is called into question as income inequality grows even among the college educated and our country is shaken by events like the murder of George Floyd. BVP was founded during a confident moment in education reform. As we move out of what I would call the “charter school 1.0” era, our narrative about who we are and why we are has to evolve, while keeping core elements of our mission, vision, and values intact. As charter leaders across the country will tell you, there is no national playbook like there was 15 years ago. We are going to need to write it ourselves.

I have many strengths to bring to this moment, as I hope you will hear from those who work with me. Learning, ideas, and wrestling with hard questions make me feel alive, and I know what instruction that makes students feel this way looks like. I take a systematic and thoughtful approach to creating the conditions for collaboration, and am practiced at navigating conflict and providing emotional steadiness when necessary. I have a growing network and am invigorated by engaging with the wider educational and political landscape. And finally, I have what one colleague called my “galaxy brain,” which allows me to see the big picture and organize the many details within it. While I believe all these strengths will make me a successful CEO and Superintendent, I know the most important thing I have to offer is a deep commitment to this place and its people.

I look forward to the opportunity to talk with you more about how we can work together toward the future of BVP.

Most sincerely,

Sarah Anderson

