

Race to the Top Implementation Team

Dr. Cindy Koss

Cynthia “Cindy” Koss, Ed.D., is Assistant State Superintendent of the Office of Standards and Curriculum for the State Department of Education. Dr. Koss oversees the Curriculum and Effective Schools Team, which has the responsibility of ensuring that the state has high quality standards in all curricular areas; as well as the Titles IA, IIA/B, VI, and X Team, which administers these federal programs, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). With the Department since 2000, Dr. Koss has also served as the Team Leader for Curriculum and Effective Schools and is currently the American Diploma Project (ADP) Team Leader for Oklahoma.

After graduating from Butler University with a degree in Music Education, Dr. Koss began her teaching career, which included positions in music as well as gifted education in Indiana, Illinois, and Oklahoma. With a master’s degree in gifted and talented education and another in secondary administration, Dr. Koss has also been a high school assistant principal and an adjunct faculty member for Oklahoma City University and the University of Central Oklahoma. She holds a Doctorate of Education in Educational Administration from Oklahoma State University and Oklahoma certifications in music, gifted education, secondary administration, and superintendency.

Dr. Ramona Paul

Ramona Paul, Ph.D., currently serves as Assistant State Superintendent, Professional Services Division, at the Oklahoma State Department of Education. During her career, she has served on the faculty in Child Development and Early Childhood Education at Oklahoma State University, Texas Woman’s University, Purdue University, University of Alabama, Birmingham, and as an administrator in Edmond and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma public schools. In January 2010, she was honored as *Oklahoman of the Year* for her work in early childhood education by the Oklahoma Today magazine.

Dr. Paul received her B.S. in Family Relations and Child Development, Early Childhood, and Elementary Education from Oklahoma State University. She received her master’s in Child and Family Development from Oklahoma State University, and her doctorate in Child Development and Family Science from Purdue University.

She currently serves on the Boards of numerous organizations and is a member of various other professional organizations as well as the author of 35 published books for children and sundry professional articles.

Jennifer Stegman

Jennifer Stegman is the Assistant State Superintendent of the Office of Accountability and Assessment for the State Department of Education. Mrs. Stegman has experienced a diverse professional and educational career. The many leadership positions that she has held have required strong management, technology, communication, and analytical skills. With a master's degree in Mathematics, Mrs. Stegman's professional positions have ranged from Computer Consultant to Assistant State Superintendent, all of which required specialized technical expertise. Over the past twenty years, she has had experience across the continuum of education as high school teacher, college professor, and teacher of adult education as well as administrative positions within the education field. For the past ten years, Mrs. Stegman has held leadership roles in the State Department of Education. In her current role as the Assistant State Superintendent for the Office of Accountability and Assessment at the State Department of Education, she has successfully implemented the State Accountability System and the Oklahoma School Testing Program for the State of Oklahoma.

Dr. Jennifer Watson

Jennifer Watson, Ph.D., is Team Leader for Curriculum and Effective Schools, Oklahoma State Department of Education. She and her team of curriculum specialists provide professional development and technical support to all PreK-12 Oklahoma school districts, as related to Oklahoma's learner standards, *The Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)*. Dr. Watson has been a member of all *PASS* standards development and review committees since their inception in 1992. She served on the Oklahoma ACT Standards of Transition/*PASS* alignment task force, is a member of the state's American Diploma Project team, and maintains membership on a wide range of committees related to curriculum alignment and instructional excellence in PK-20 and career education.

Dr. Watson has been the Language Arts Director for the Oklahoma State Department of Education and Language Arts Coordinator for Putnam City Schools, a PK-12 district of 20,000 students in Oklahoma City. She has taught all levels of high school English, as well as undergraduate and graduate courses in both English and educational administration.

Dr. Watson holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Oklahoma City University; a Master of Arts in English Traditional Studies from the University of Central Oklahoma; and a Ph. D. in Educational Administration and Curriculum Supervision from the University of Oklahoma.

Joyce DeFehr

Joyce DeFehr is Executive Director of State Testing at the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Ms. DeFehr works with testing vendors and oversees an assessment team on the development, implementation, scoring, and reporting of the general and modified assessments within the Oklahoma State Testing Program. With the Department for five years, she served first

as the English/Language Arts assessment specialist before transitioning to her current position also within the Office of Accountability and Assessments.

Ms. DeFehr earned her B.S. in Education from the University of Oklahoma. She began her teaching career with elementary students at Oklahoma City Public Schools and later taught Pre AP and traditional English/Language Arts at the middle school level for Bartlesville Public Schools. She completed a Masters Degree in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma in 2001 prior to joining the State Department of Education in 2005.

Karyn Hutchens

Karyn Hutchens is the Executive Director of Resident Teacher/Professional Development/School Board Member for the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Some of the programs Ms. Hutchens administers are professional development, evaluation training for first-time administrators, training for First-Year Superintendents, the beginning teacher program (Residency), and training and administration of school board members for the state of Oklahoma.

After graduating from Texas A&M University, Ms. Hutchens began her career as a middle school English teacher in Lufkin, Texas. Ms. Hutchens also was a High School English, social studies, geography, and history teacher in Kingwood, Texas and Benjamin, Texas. Ms. Hutchens completed her master's degree in English at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, and has served as an adjunct faculty member at Stephen F. Austin State University, San Jacinto College, and Vernon College. Ms. Hutchens has been with the Oklahoma State Department of Education since 2006.

Mary Pearson

Mary Pearson is the Executive Director of Title I/ School Support/ARRA for the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). Ms. Pearson is assisting the federal program team in administering the Title I American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA); the state's School Support Teams and assists the schools in need of improvement with planning, technical assistance and guidance in improving student achievement.

Ms. Pearson graduated from Phillips University in 1974 with a degree in Elementary Education. She was a business owner in Enid before moving to Oklahoma City, where she began her teaching career in 1988 at Creston Hills Elementary and then at Quail Creek Elementary in the Oklahoma City Public Schools. Other district positions were a parent liaison at North Highland Math and Science Academy; a Dean of Instruction at Taft and Hoover Middle Schools; an assistant principal at Taft Elementary School, and a principal at Willow Brook Elementary School. She received her Master's of Education degree from the University of Oklahoma in 2000 before coming to the State Department of Education in 2005.

Kerri White

Kerri White is Executive Director of High School Reform for the State Department of Education. Ms. White supports Oklahoma secondary schools in preparing all students for their academic and professional lives beyond high school. With the Department for four years, she served first as the Mathematics Director before transitioning into her current position, also in the Office of Standards and Curriculum. She currently is an invited participant in the writing team for the Common Core Standards Initiative for the K-12 Grade-by-Grade Mathematics Standards.

After graduating from Oklahoma Baptist University, Ms. White began her career as a middle school and high school mathematics teacher at Deer Creek Middle School and then Putnam City High School. She has completed a master's degree in educational leadership at Southern Nazarene University and is currently working on a doctorate degree in school administration at Oklahoma State University.