

State Superintendent-Elect Underly: Announces assistant state superintendent appointments

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(Madison, WI) — State Superintendent-elect Jill Underly announced today her final appointments to her Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) leadership team.

“This group embodies a deep well of expertise and a fierce commitment to education,” said Dr. Underly. “They bring with them a vast diversity of personal and professional experience at a critical time as our communities, schools, kids and families continue to face the lingering challenges from the pandemic. This team is built to listen, collaborate with stakeholders, and get to work to build a public education system where every child gets what they need to succeed, every day.”

Tricia Collins has been named Assistant State Superintendent-designate for the Division for Finance and Management. She began her career in state service working at the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau where she was a fiscal analyst. Tricia then joined the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) as the school consultant for the private school choice program. From 2013 until 2019, Tricia served as the Director of the School Management Services team at the DPI. Most recently, Tricia served as the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection at the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

Tricia is a graduate of Marquette University Law School. She and her husband, both graduates of Augustana College, have three children. In her free time, Tricia enjoys visiting bookstores and Wisconsin supper clubs. She also enjoys watching sports and musical events, especially when her children are participating.

Keona S. Jones has been re-appointed Assistant State Superintendent of the Division for Student and School Success. Prior to being appointed in 2019, Keona served as the Deputy Chief of Schools in the Racine Unified School District. Keona has more than 24 years of experience working at various levels of both public, private and higher education institutions. Over the course of her career, Keona has served students and families as both an educator and school administrator. She is an experienced leader in education who has been recognized as the Administrator of the Year by the Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted.

Keona holds a bachelor's degree in Special Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and a master's degree in Educational Leadership/Curriculum and Instruction from Cardinal Stritch University, where she is also about to complete her doctorate.

Duy Nguyen has been named Assistant State Superintendent-designate for the Division for Academic Excellence. He served for more than 17 years in schools as a kindergarten, first- and second-grade teacher, learning coordinator, and an elementary school principal. Duy also spent several summers teaching middle and high school students in Nanjing, China. He was a librarian in Quito, Ecuador before heading to New York City to study at Teachers College-Columbia University. Duy started the first laboratory school in Wisconsin and to our knowledge, will be the first Southeast Asian state assistant superintendent in Wisconsin history.

Duy earned his bachelor's degree from UW-Madison and master's degrees in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from Teachers College-Columbia University and UW-Madison. Duy and his wife have two children. His family loves the outdoors and spending time with family and friends.

Tessa Michaelson Schmidt has been named Assistant State Superintendent-designate for the Division for Libraries and Technology. She has been a public library consultant with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for nearly ten years, specializing in library youth services and inclusive services for all library users. Throughout her career, Tessa has had one foot in education and the other in libraries. Prior to DPI, she was a third-grade teacher and K-8 school library media specialist, as well as a director and librarian at a public library, and a librarian for the UW's Cooperative Children's Book Center. While at DPI, Tessa led Growing Wisconsin Readers, an early literacy initiative based in public libraries. She also developed the Inclusive Services Assessment and Guide, a nationally recognized inventory and reflection tool for libraries to evaluate accessibility, equity, and

barriers to services.

Tessa earned her undergraduate and masters degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is married and has two children, one of whom recently finished public school four-year-old kindergarten. Her husband is an Army Reservist currently on active duty. Tessa and her family are outdoor enthusiasts working to visit all of the Wisconsin State Parks.

These new appointees join previously announced Deputy State Superintendent-designate Dr. John W. Johnson, Executive Director-designate in the Office of the State Superintendent Thomas McCarthy, Special Assistant to the State Superintendent Latoya Holiday, and Assistant State Superintendent-designate Paul Manriquez, Division for Learning Support.

More information about State Superintendent-elect Underly's transition — including scheduling requests — can be found at <https://dpi-transition.wi.gov/>.