



Timothy Purnell, Ed.D., is a hybrid executive and educator whose career has been defined by student-centered leadership, organizational transformation, public trust, and measurable results. He brings an uncommon blend of senior executive experience, classroom credibility, governance expertise, and community engagement that aligns strongly with Nevada State University's next chapter of growth.

Dr. Purnell currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of a large statewide governance association while also maintaining an active faculty role, including a current 4/4 teaching load. Across twenty-four years in the classroom, he has taught many first-generation students and remained deeply connected to the realities of teaching, student support, academic rigor, and faculty life. He is a longtime advocate for access-oriented education and believes strongly that institutions transform lives when they combine high expectations with meaningful support.

His executive record reflects strategic execution, fiscal stewardship, public accountability, and the ability to lead in complex governance environments. He has built and strengthened C-level teams, modernized systems, advanced accountability structures, negotiated collective bargaining agreements across multiple bargaining units, and driven major organizational maturation. His leadership has produced record revenue growth, expanded alternative revenue streams, and supported international scaling and operational growth. He has also overseen capital projects and brings an entrepreneurial mindset to partnership development, institutional advancement, and long-term sustainability.

Dr. Purnell's leadership philosophy is grounded in transparency, visibility, and trust-building. He is the recipient of the 2024 REAL Leaders Award for Transparency and has been recognized nationally for excellence in educational leadership, including being named **NASS National Superintendent of the Year**. His work has also earned honors for

community impact and inclusive leadership, including Seton Hall University's **Many Are One Award** and the **Spirit of Somerset Award**. In addition, he has been invited to present nationally, including at the White House during President Obama's **ConnectED** initiative.

His service portfolio reflects the breadth expected of a university president. He has served as a **Middle States Commissioner and Finance Chair**, strengthening his expertise in accreditation, governance, institutional quality, and financial responsibility. He also serves in leadership roles connected to athletics, philanthropy, executive networks, and board governance, including work with YPO and education-focused boards. This range of experience has sharpened his ability to manage complexity, build coalitions, and sustain mission-focused work across multiple demanding settings.

As Superintendent in Somerville, Dr. Purnell led with an equity-centered approach that translated vision into systems. Under his leadership, the district expanded opportunity for vulnerable students through targeted pathways, mentoring, mental health supports, trauma-informed practices, early-alert systems, and partnerships that addressed basic needs and belonging. These efforts contributed to measurable gains in graduation rates for Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students. His data-informed approach earned a Lighthouse Award and reflected a larger commitment to ensuring that student success is not aspirational language, but an operational reality.

At the center of Dr. Purnell's candidacy is a clear belief: strong institutions are built by leaders who are visible, decisive, collaborative, and humane at once. He is especially drawn to Nevada State University because of its access-oriented mission, its commitment to first-generation and underserved students, its emphasis on teaching and student support, and its extraordinary momentum. With Nevada State entering a defining period marked by strategic plan implementation, the North Las Vegas expansion, SMART Growth, and increasing regional importance, Dr. Purnell offers the combination of executive leadership, faculty perspective, community-building, and entrepreneurial partnership development needed to help the university strengthen student success, expand opportunity, and deepen its impact across Nevada.

TIMOTHY J. PURNELL, Ed.D.

Visionary Leader | Coalition Builder | AI Innovator

TED Talk: <https://bit.ly/3prAyEB>
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March 22, 2026

Amy J. Carvalho, Chair
Matt McNair, Chancellor
Nevada State University Presidential Search Committee

Dear Chair Carvalho, Chancellor McNair, and Members of the Presidential Search Committee:

While I hold deep respect for Nevada State University's mission and strategic priorities, I do not want to use this letter merely to mirror them back to you. Instead, I want to explain why this opportunity resonates with me in a profound and personal way and why I believe I am well positioned to serve as your next President. Nevada State University is at a moment when forward-looking, mission-centered, and collaborative leadership matters more than ever. Equally important is the entrepreneurial ability to build partnerships and connect people, ideas, and resources in ways that expand student success and institutional opportunity.

I bring to this opportunity twenty-four years of teaching experience, and I currently maintain a full 4/4 faculty load, an ongoing commitment that keeps me closely connected to the lived realities of students, the demands of teaching, and the daily work of academic life. I know the pressures of environments in which faculty are asked to sustain heavy teaching and service loads while also supporting student research, scholarship, and high academic standards. Having spent twenty-four years as a member of the AFT, served in executive and administrative leadership, and sat as a trustee at County College of Morris, I have seen these realities from multiple vantage points. That perspective has been especially valuable in my extensive experience negotiating collective bargaining agreements across multiple bargaining units, work that has reinforced my commitment to respectful collaboration, transparent communication, and principled leadership in complex institutional settings.

Having taught many first-generation students over the course of my career, I understand firsthand the transformative power of accessible, high-quality education and the importance of institutions that meet students with both rigor and support. In Somerville, I worked to turn that belief into systems of support by adding an associate degree pathway for at-risk students (through a partnership with a community college), creating a mentoring program with successful community mentors, redesigning counseling into a one-to-one model, implementing digital data walls for early alerts on student progress, and partnering with a local food bank to provide free food to children on Fridays. Recognized with a Lighthouse Award, that data-informed approach strengthened intervention efforts and contributed to measurable gains in graduation rates, including increases of 7% for Black students, 8% for Hispanic students, and 8% for economically disadvantaged students. We also created a child center for aspiring educators so that students with children could continue their studies, became the first fully trauma-informed school district in the state, and expanded mental health resources to better support student well-being. That perspective is central to how I lead. I would welcome the opportunity to remain

connected by teaching one class each year, because I believe the strongest university leaders are those who continue to engage directly in the core educational mission of the institution.

In addition to my classroom experience, I bring executive leadership that aligns closely with the leadership agenda outlined in your profile. As chief executive officer of the largest governance association in New Jersey, I lead a complex, high-visibility enterprise requiring strategic execution, fiscal stewardship, transparent communication, and trust-building across diverse constituencies. Working within a governance structure comparable in many respects to a board of more than twenty regents, I have developed the capacity to lead with clarity, collaboration, and accountability while advancing organizational growth and mission-focused outcomes. I also serve as the organization's chief spokesperson, testifying on legislation at the State House and cultivating strong bipartisan relationships with legislators and public leaders. Under my leadership, NJSBA successfully advanced advocacy efforts for high-impact tutoring statewide and supported policy initiatives, including Assembly Bill 5365, designed to keep students engaged in school, while also opposing the NJGPA exit exam in service of stronger graduation outcomes. I would bring that same disciplined, relationship-centered leadership to Nevada State University as it continues to strengthen its culture, expand its partnerships, and guide its next phase of institutional development.

I am also drawn to this role because of the university's momentum and its extraordinary potential as an anchor institution for Southern Nevada. Nevada State University's growth, expanding academic footprint, statewide mission, North Las Vegas initiative, and SMART Growth strategy all point to a university entering a defining chapter. This moment requires a president who can serve not only as an internal leader, but as a visible ambassador and coalition-builder across business, government, philanthropy, and civic life. As a member of YPO, the world's largest leadership community of chief executives, I am part of a global network of more than 38,000 leaders in over 150 countries whose organizations collectively employ roughly 22 million people and generate approximately \$9 trillion in annual revenue. I would draw on those relationships to help Nevada State University form strategic partnerships that expand student opportunity, deepen workforce alignment, and elevate institutional visibility. I am mindful that higher education has also seen examples, such as High Point University under President Nido Qubein, whose path to the presidency emerged from business leadership rather than a conventional academic trajectory and whose tenure has been marked by extraordinary institutional growth, including enrollment gains of well over 300 percent. Nevada State University's North Las Vegas initiative and SMART Growth strategy present a similarly compelling opportunity to pair bold vision with partnership-driven execution in service of students and the region. As an entrepreneur and executive, I have built cross-sector partnerships that create sustainable social impact, opened doors across sectors, and cultivated relationships that expand institutional visibility and opportunity. I understand how to connect ideas, people, and resources in ways that advance mission while building long-term external confidence.

Throughout my career, I have worked at the intersection of educational opportunity, organizational leadership, and public trust, guided by a simple but deeply held belief: we must educate students regardless of where they come from. I understand what it means to serve students for whom education is not inherited, but earned through resilience, sacrifice, and institutional support. That work earned national recognition, including the opportunity to present at the White House during President Obama's ConnectED event. As Superintendent in Somerville, I led a district that served students from three homeless shelters as well as incarcerated youth, and we worked intentionally to ensure that every student experienced a genuine sense of belonging while also gaining practical tools for life, including financial literacy and instruction in essential skills such as how to file taxes. Earlier in my career, while

teaching in Montclair, I also taught students experiencing homelessness, which further deepened my understanding of how essential it is for institutions to meet students with both rigor and compassion. That is why Nevada State University's focus on student success and retention,

especially for first-generation and underserved students, resonates with me so deeply. I am especially drawn to the university's belief that excellence fosters opportunity and to its holistic understanding of student success through belonging, support, workforce readiness, and long-term mobility. To me, that is not simply a statement of values; it is a call to leadership that demands measurable outcomes, durable partnerships, and a culture that honors the hard work it takes for students to arrive, persist, and succeed. I would welcome the opportunity to help advance that work by supporting faculty and staff, strengthening partnerships, and helping cultivate a university ethos that sees the resilience, determination, and hard-earned ambition of its students as a defining source of institutional strength.

My executive experience has required transparent leadership, team development, fiscal stewardship, and strategic execution at the highest level. As CEO, I have led significant organizational maturation by building and strengthening C-level teams, modernizing operations, advancing accountability systems, and using data to guide institutional decisions. This work contributed to the highest annual recurring revenue in the history of both NJSBA and AMS, while also driving exponential growth through the launch and scaling of AMS operations in China. These results were achieved through disciplined management, trust-building communication, and a willingness to align people, systems, and resources around a shared vision. In every leadership role I have held, I have worked intentionally to foster a family atmosphere grounded in respect, shared purpose, and genuine care for people.

My record also reflects the qualities Nevada State University seeks in shared governance, transparency, and inclusivity. I was honored with the 2024 REAL Leaders Award for Transparency, and my commitment to ethical, open leadership is also reflected in my TEDx talk on transparency and leadership, organized around the T.R.U.T.H. framework. I have seen firsthand that institutions become stronger when leaders invite engagement, listen carefully, communicate openly, and create cultures in which people feel respected and empowered. That is why Nevada State University's commitment to shared governance is especially compelling to me. I would approach that responsibility with humility, consistency, and deep respect for the voices of faculty, staff, students, and system leadership. I also believe transparency must be practiced regularly and visibly. As superintendent, I held monthly brown bag lunch meetings in a district of 2,500 students, and in my current role I host monthly town hall forums. As President, I would continue that approach through regular monthly fireside chats open to the university community and the public.

I believe those experiences align directly with Nevada State University's need for a president who can guide a fast-growing institution with both strategic clarity and operational discipline. Your next president must manage growth without losing mission, support institutional maturation without overcomplicating culture, and move major initiatives forward while remaining visible, candid, and approachable. I recognize as well that the strategic plan beginning in July will require immediate and focused implementation. At the same time, once implementation is underway, I would welcome the opportunity to assess with faculty and campus leaders where deeper engagement could further strengthen execution in the years ahead. That leadership challenge is one I understand well. Across my career, I have been recognized not only for bold vision and fiscal acumen, but for compassion-centered leadership that builds morale, strengthens internal culture, and creates buy-in during periods of change.

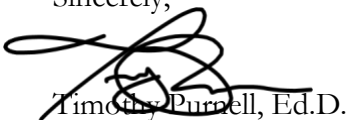
In my current professional life, I balance an unusually broad portfolio of leadership responsibilities, serving simultaneously serving as CEO of NJSBA, Teaching Assistant Professor at Montclair State University, a Middle States Commissioner, Executive Board Member of New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletics Association, a Regional Area Officer with YPO, and a member of several boards. That range of responsibility has sharpened my ability to manage complexity, prioritize effectively, and sustain mission-focused work across multiple demanding settings. It has also prepared me well for the breadth and complexity of this presidency. Through my service as a Middle States Commissioner and Finance Chair, I have developed a deeper understanding of accreditation, institutional quality, governance, and financial responsibility. My work on the Executive Board of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletics Association, my leadership of an Education Foundation, and my service across additional boards have further strengthened my appreciation for public accountability, student development, and resource cultivation.

I am equally attentive to the importance of fiscal responsibility and sustainability. The next president of Nevada State University must understand and navigate the institution's funding structure effectively and build resilience in a complex financial environment. My record reflects comfort with enterprise accountability, financial decision-making, and growth-oriented strategy, always anchored in mission rather than optics. At NJSBA, I raised \$3 million in alternative revenue, and at AMS, I quickly expanded and scaled operations in China, experiences that reflect both entrepreneurial vision and disciplined execution. I also oversaw \$2.6 million in capital projects in Somerville, which deepened my understanding of responsible planning, infrastructure stewardship, and implementation. I would welcome the opportunity to help Nevada State University continue the trajectory already underway in land development and institutional growth, particularly in light of the SMART Growth strategy and my own exposure to land development efforts connected to NJSBA's Hamilton, New Jersey site. I would bring to Nevada State University a steady commitment to aligning budgets with priorities, making data-informed decisions, pursuing innovative revenue strategies, and communicating clearly about both challenges and opportunities.

At the center of my candidacy is a simple belief: strong institutions are built by leaders who are willing to be visible, decisive, transparent, and humane all at once. Throughout my career, I have devoted myself to educational leadership, organizational transformation, and the cultivation of high-performing, inclusive teams, and that work has been recognized at the highest levels. Whether in the classroom, where I was recognized as the highest-rated professor in the nation (Ratemyprofessor.com), or in executive leadership, where I was honored as NASS National Superintendent of the Year, my record reflects a consistent pattern of excellence, impact, and results. I have also been honored with recognitions such as Seton Hall University's Many Are One Award and the Spirit of Somerset Award for helping transform communities. Nevada State University would not be taking a chance on potential alone but selecting a leader whose career has been defined by performance, trust, and mission-driven achievement.

Thank you for your consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my background, leadership approach, and commitment to student-centered growth can help Nevada State University advance its next chapter with clarity, partnership, and purpose.

Sincerely,



Timothy Purnell, Ed.D.

TIMOTHY J. PURNELL, Ed.D.

Visionary Leader | Coalition Builder | AI Innovator

TED Talk: <https://bit.ly/3prAyEB>
www.linkedin.com/in/drpuernell

Hybrid executive and educator with experience leading a large statewide governance association in New Jersey while maintaining a 24-year teaching career focused on first-generation students and a current 4/4 faculty load. Award-winning CEO, Middle States Commissioner and Finance Chair, and higher education governance leader with expertise in student success, academic rigor, fundraising, labor relations, mental health, and data-informed strategy. Proven record of building high-performing teams, generating record revenue growth at NJSBA and AMS, scaling international operations in China, and leading complex organizations with transparency, fiscal discipline, and mission-centered vision. Nationally recognized for excellence in teaching, educational leadership, and community impact, including honors as NASS National Superintendent of the Year and recipient of the REAL Leaders Award for Transparency.

Current Employment/Positions

7/2022 – Present NJ School Boards Association & Ed Leadership Foundation

Chief Executive Officer

From \$9.8M to \$14M ARR (*Organizational Maturation*)

(end-to-end P&L responsibility)

2024 Real Leaders Transparent Leadership Award

I lead New Jersey's largest public governance association of elected and appointed public officials, serving more than 5,000 members, along with its affiliate foundation. Drove \$3M in alternative revenue growth and increased full-time workforce by 50 percent. Serve as the organization's lead voice for civic engagement and legislative advocacy, working with a governmental relations team that tracks and testifies on education-related legislation across New Jersey while sustaining strong relationships on both sides of the aisle. Restructured the organization around three pillars, created a clear departmental ethos, and cultivated a family-centered culture grounded in innovation, transparency, and staff engagement. Launched blue-sky thinking exercises centered on the "realm of possibilities" and "dream without limitations," hosted live podcasts and town halls to strengthen transparency and statewide visibility, and led major initiatives in shared services, workforce readiness, high-impact tutoring, and STEAMTank.

Advanced mission-focused policy leadership and AI-enabled member services through the implementation of personalized content delivery systems, including Coach Carla, an AI-powered training bot designed to facilitate learning, assess ethical governance, and support members facing complex leadership challenges.

Critical Organizational Challenges Addressed:

- Limited innovation and investment in AI
- Inconsistent execution/low staff involvement in decision-making
- Low morale/trust

2002 – Present **Montclair State University**
42%-48% First-Generation Students
 Teaching Professor, 4/4 faculty load
 Full-time Faculty Member
2015 Highest Rated Professor in the Nation

Advanced from adjunct professor to instructional assistant to full-time Assistant Professor, reflecting sustained impact and institutional trust. Developed and successfully proposed new curriculum offerings, including Mental Health, and embedded cultural literacy into academic programming. Currently supporting the development of a new doctoral program in education. Maintain a full-time faculty appointment with a 30 TCH annual teaching load while also volunteering with the Office of First-Generation Initiatives.

2020 – Present **Seton Hall University**
 Adjunct Professor, School Finance
2019 Many are One award

2020 – Present **Middle States Commission**
 Commissioner, Chair of Finance

2017 – Present **Young Presidents Organization (YPO)**
 Membership organization with over 38,000 CEOs globally
 Member, Regional Area Officer/Chair of Regional Conduct Committee
 Former Chapter Chair, Membership Officer

Previous Experience

1/2020 – 2/2021 **NEXT for AUTISM**
 Interim Chief Executive Officer
 From \$3.9M to \$6M ARR (*Organizational Maturation*)

Served as Interim Chief Executive Officer and champion of civic engagement, leading national programs and advocacy initiatives focused on advancing neurodiversity and enhancing quality of life for individuals with autism. Built strategic public-private partnerships, helped drive policy reform, and collaborated with major healthcare institutions and philanthropic funders. Spearheaded innovative initiatives in housing, employment, and community integration, while overseeing fundraising strategy and leading nationwide capacity-building efforts.

Critical Organizational Challenges Addressed:

- Founder's syndrome
- Community trust/morale issues
- Lack of innovation

7/2017 – 1/2020 American Montessori Society, Chief Executive Officer
From \$5M to \$10M ARR (*Organizational Maturation*)

Led the world's largest Montessori organization with multi-site international operations. Directed strategic planning that redefined and rebranded the association's ethos, established new core values, and aligned vision and mission across the organization. Created the annual fund and endowment to build long-term philanthropic strength. Delivered 27 percent year-over-year revenue growth across three years through diversified revenue streams, expanded partnerships, and a 79 percent increase in donations and sponsorships. Led global expansion, including the launch of operations in China, generating the highest capital growth since the organization's founding in 1960.

Strengthened member engagement through new affinity groups and services, increasing membership by 9 percent and adding more than 1,000 schools. Transformed the annual 5,000-attendee conference with a concierge model and modernized registration systems. Implemented NetSuite to enhance financial transparency and internal controls, with oversight of budgeting, forecasting, audits, grants, and KPI reporting. Repositioned the organization from the brink of collapse through innovative business strategy, social media branding, stakeholder mobilization, and national unification, while serving as chief external spokesperson and public champion. (<https://tinyurl.com/yaddeutm>).

Critical Organizational Challenges Addressed:

- Verge of extinction
- Strategy/execution
- Enterprise/rapid expansion to China

2/2011 – 7/2017 Somerville Public Schools, Superintendent of Schools
District of Distinction/Lighthouse Awards for data-driven decisions
Spirit of Somerset County Award
2015 NJ Superintendent of the Year/Digital Leader to Follow
2016 National Superintendent of the Year

Led operations of a \$50 million organization with 400 employees, ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Directed a multi-million-dollar technology integration initiative and \$2.6 million in capital projects, including shared services strategies that delivered significant cost savings.

Transformed organizational culture by building a family-centered community with strong educator buy-in, including the launch of the annual Super's Bowl/Community Investment Day, which helped earn the Spirit of Somerset County Award. Partnered with a regional food pantry to provide free meals for children district-wide and led the district to become the first fully trauma-informed district in the state.

Collaborated with bipartisan legislators and community leaders to create a world-class educational model that included an associate degree program for at-risk and first-generation students, an alternative high school for non-traditional learners, and an exclusive Medical Sciences Academy partnership with Robert Wood Johnson/Saint Barnabas Hospital leadership.

Launched high-impact initiatives including free meals, an alumni mentoring program, digital data walls, a redesigned counseling structure, and a childcare center to improve student outcomes. Increased Hispanic graduation rates by 8 percent, Black graduation rates by 7 percent, and economically disadvantaged graduation rates by 9 percent, contributing to a top 6 percent national high school ranking and selection to present at the White House with President Obama during the ConnectED event.

Improved morale through an educator recognition series, successfully concluded two negotiated bargaining agreements across three unions, and maintained a highly visible, open-door leadership style through regular brown bag lunch sessions.

1/2011 – 7/2022 Purnell Group, LLC & It's Anonymous (startup)
Founder/Chief Executive Officer

Founder and Chief Executive Officer of a consulting firm focused on helping organizations maximize impact through mission-driven strategic planning, leadership development, personnel management, financial planning, executive search, collective bargaining, and legal risk mitigation. Created an anonymous crowdsourcing platform for social impact and an AI-enabled solution that helps companies, businesses, and communities unlock hidden organizational potential by elevating unheard voices and surfacing meaningful insights.

7/1998 – 2/2011 Other Positions

Centenary University – **Adjunct Professor**

Fairleigh Dickinson University – **Adjunct Professor**

Georgian Court University – **Adjunct Professor**

New Jersey State Board of Examiners – **Legal Chair**

Harding Township Schools - **Superintendent of Schools**

West Long Branch School District – **Principal**

School District of the Chathams - **Assistant Principal/District Testing Coordinator**

Great Meadows Regional School District - **Assistant Principal/Principal**

Montclair Public Schools - **Science Teacher**

Awards - *Top Blog Award*, Youngest Superintendent in the State, *Phoenix Award*, *Geraldine Dodge Foundation School Leadership*, *Governor's Teacher Recognition* award, *Weston Teaching in Excellence* award, science/Physics consultant – Yogi Berra Museum

Education

Masters in Business Administration - Georgia Southwestern State University, In pursuit

Doctorate in Educational Administration - Seton Hall University, 2008

Masters in Administration and Supervision - Montclair State University, 2002

Bachelor of Arts and Sciences - University of Delaware, 1998

High School Diploma - Montville Township High Schools, 1993

Inducted into the MTHS Hall of Fame

Community/Professional/Boards

Current Leadership Roles

- **Hope and Future (H+F)** (2016 – Present): Board Member, Executive Committee
 - **New Jersey Association of School Administrators** (2013 – Present): Mentor for Superintendent Licensure
 - **National Association of School Superintendents** (2016 – Present): Board Member, Executive Committee
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Previous Leadership Roles

- **County College of Morris** (2020 – 2022): Board Member
 - **Effective School Solutions** (2021 – 2025): Executive Board Member
 - **Good Shepherd Mission** (2019 – 2022): Board Member
 - **Council for American Private Education (CAPE)** (2017 – 2020): Board Member
 - **Montessori Public Policy Initiative** (2017 – 2020): Board Member, Executive Committee
 - **District Administrator Leadership Institute (DALI)** (2016 – 2021): Executive Board Member
 - **Somerset Prosecutor’s Task Force** (2014 – 2017): Led School Working Group for Standard Response Protocol
 - **Somerset County Association of School Administrators** (2011 – 2017): President (2013 – 2015)
 - **Advisory Council of the Office of Governance & Leadership Development** (2011 – 2013)
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Volunteer & Specialized Roles

- **Team HealthCare** (2008 – 2020): Triage Volunteer
- **NJDOE Collaborative Assessment for Planning & Achievement** (2005 – 2006): Team Leader