

Dr. Monica Henson is a superintendent with a uniquely varied set of experiences gained from leadership roles that span the East Coast from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire to North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. An acclaimed National Board Certified Teacher, Dr. Henson has held a series of progressively responsible leadership roles since 1999. She has served as a department chair, assistant principal, principal, central office administrator, regional administrator, and superintendent in district, charter, and independent public schools, including statewide school system leadership in Georgia and Florida.

Dr. Henson grew up in the shadow of the Great Smoky Mountains of western North Carolina one of a long line in a family of educators. Her paternal grandfather was principal of a community schoolhouse in the mountains, and her maternal grandmother taught second grade in the mountains for 39 years. Dr. Henson was the third generation of her family to attend college, which was unusual for the Southern Appalachian region forty years ago.

After earning a full academic scholarship to Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina, Dr. Henson considered a career as an attorney and attended law school at the University of Georgia before deciding to enter the classroom as a high school English teacher and basketball coach in Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia's largest school district. She took several years at home when her children began to arrive before moving to Massachusetts and earning a National Board Certificate when she returned to the classroom. During her years as a stay-at-home mother, she coordinated adult and youth sports programs at the local YMCA and became a high school sports official, traveling across metropolitan Atlanta for basketball games and western North Carolina for basketball games and volleyball matches. Dr. Henson was one of the first women in Georgia to officiate boys' varsity high school basketball beginning in the mid-1980s.

Dr. Henson's preparation for educational leadership is exemplary. She earned a master's degree in administration and supervision at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, and a doctorate in educational leadership at Nova Southeastern University in North Miami Beach, Florida. She is a diplomate in educational policy and leadership of the Hunt Institute at Duke University and a member of the National Superintendents Academy. A Fellow in the first cohort of the national renowned Building Excellent Schools leadership development program in Boston, Dr. Henson served her administrative internship with Dr. John King at Roxbury Preparatory Charter School in Dorchester, before Dr. King went on to the United States Education Department as Secretary of Education.

Dr. Henson was a pioneer in the concept of the flipped classroom and employed project-based learning in defiance of the move toward test prep in the dawn of high-stakes testing. An inductee into the Teacher Leadership Academy of Massachusetts, Dr. Henson was recognized by Commissioner of Education Dr. David Driscoll as one of the Commonwealth's most talented and forward-thinking classroom teachers. Her students in Leominster Public Schools scored among the highest in the state during the first three administrations of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.

Dr. Henson's greatest accomplishment in life is raising five children, two of whom went through public schools in special education—all are now successfully navigating productive adulthood with homes of their own. She delights in her five grandchildren, ranging in age from four to seventeen. Dr. Henson is an avid sports fan, rooting for the Red Sox when they aren't playing the Atlanta Braves and the Celtics when they aren't playing the Hawks. She loves watching Georgia Bulldogs college football and basketball, flower and vegetable gardening,

playing old-time gospel hymns on her vintage piano, and live music, especially traditional bluegrass.