



Leading Now



Superintendent Spotlight - Dr. Almudena "Almi" Abeyta

Dr. Almudena "Almi" Abeyta has served as superintendent of Chelsea Public Schools since 2019. Her educational career started as a kindergarten teacher in Santa Fe Public Schools. One of her proudest moments in her career was handing her daughter her high school diploma. Check out Leading Now's Q&A with Dr. Abeyta below:

Can you share your path to becoming a superintendent?

My path to becoming a superintendent was a traditional path. I started my career in education as a kindergarten teacher in 1996 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Then, I moved to the Boston area for graduate school and became a principal in 2004 in the Boston Public Schools. I served as an assistant superintendent in three different school districts: Boston Public Schools from 2009-2012, Santa Fe Public Schools from 2012-2017 and Somerville Public Schools from 2017-2019. I also went through explicit training to prepare for the superintendency. In 2008, I was accepted to the Harvard Urban Superintendent Program where I enrolled in courses specific for the superintendency and interacted and learned from sitting superintendents. Then, in 2015, I enrolled in the ALAS (Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents) Superintendent Leadership Academy. I became the proud Superintendent of Chelsea Public Schools in 2019.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is working with principals and our senior leadership team to develop future leaders. I enjoy seeing others' gifts and talents and encouraging them to pursue their career goals. I like to develop and grow leaders.

What do you consider your biggest professional success?

I always say that I believe in public schools and that my schools need to be good enough for my own child. Throughout my career in public education, my daughter attended the schools where I was a leader. On the last day of her K-12 educational career, I had the pleasure of handing my daughter her high school diploma. That was a special mother-educator moment for me that I will always cherish.

What do you consider your biggest personal success?

My biggest personal success was working full-time as an assistant superintendent while working on my doctorate and being a mother to a beautiful daughter. I am proud of being a present mother

for my daughter amidst having to balance my career and writing a dissertation. I wrote a lot of my dissertation in an ice skating rink during my daughter's ice skating lessons. And, I am proud of making it through some very tough Covid years as a superintendent. I am grateful that I can say that I still enjoy this work!

What one piece of advice would you like to share with other superintendents?

What I am learning as I grow in this work, is that I cannot do this work alone. Thus, I need to trust the people around me. My advice is to surround yourself with people who are talented and unleash their potential.

What has been most valuable to you as a member of Leading Now?

I have really enjoyed meeting superintendents in my own state and other states. I find strength in being with others who are doing the work. It helps to know that I am not alone. I always look forward to meeting with my superintendent friends and colleagues.

If you would like to connect with Dr. Abeyta, you can reach her at aabeyta@chelseama.gov.

Want to nominate a peer for a Superintendent Spotlight? Send a quick note to Leading Now's Program Director at programming@leadingnow.org.