

Sara Schnoor, Ph.D.

PROFILE

Educational leadership scholar-practitioner and university instructor with more than 20 years of experience across PK-12 and higher education. Experienced in teaching master’s and doctoral students, advising dissertations and capstones, supervising leadership internships, and contributing to accreditation, program assessment, and continuous improvement. Designs rigorous, relational learning in face-to-face, hybrid, and online formats for working professionals. Research examines how restorative, equity-centered, and participatory leadership creates belonging and sustainable organizational change. Brings extensive principalship experience, applied qualitative research expertise, and a commitment to preparing ethical, reflective leaders who use inquiry to address complex problems of practice.

EDUCATION

Superintendent Endorsement Concordia University - River Forest, IL	2024
Ph.D. in Educational Leadership New Mexico State University - Las Cruces, NM	2021
M.Ed. in Educational Leadership Clemson University - Clemson, SC	2006
B.M. in Music Performance and Education Lawrence University - Appleton, WI	2002
Associated Colleges of the Midwest Urban Education Program - Chicago, IL	

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University Lecturer Governors State University - University Park, IL	Aug. 2024-Present
<i>Education Administration, M.A. and Interdisciplinary Leadership, Ed.D. programs</i>	
• Teach face-to-face, hybrid, and online graduate courses that prepare school-system and organizational leaders to address complex problems of practice. • Design and facilitate learning in organizational and instructional leadership, school improvement, supervision and evaluation, community engagement, culturally responsive leadership, and leading change. • Support doctoral students in the Interdisciplinary Leadership Ed.D. program through coursework, mentoring, and service on dissertation and capstone committees. • Supervise and mentor 10-12 leadership interns annually through observation, feedback cycles, and coaching focused on instructional leadership and equitable practice. • Analyze student evaluations and instructional data to strengthen course design, student engagement, and continuous program improvement. • Contribute to CAEP accreditation by aligning coursework, key assessments, and clinical experiences with national educator-preparation standards and Illinois licensure expectations. • Serve on the Institutional Strategic Planning 2030 Working Group and university committees supporting equitable student success, retention, professional learning, and educator recruitment. • Collaborate with faculty to strengthen culturally responsive teaching and leadership preparation, co-construct learning with students, and use student-centered data to create more inclusive instructional environments.	

SELECTED TEACHING AND SCHOLARLY EXPERTISE

• Organizational and Instructional Leadership	• Restorative Justice Practices
• School Improvement	• Dissertation and Capstone Development
• Supervision and Evaluation	• Qualitative Methods and Applied Research
• Culturally Responsive Leadership	• Change Leadership

RESEARCH AGENDA

My research examines how educational leaders create the conditions for belonging and transformational change in schools and systems. I draw on qualitative, participatory, and arts-based methodologies to investigate restorative leadership, stakeholder voice, equity-centered decision-making, human-centered organizational improvement, and inclusive school cultures. My scholarship connects rigorous inquiry with the lived realities of practitioners and communities and supports leaders in developing ethical, sustainable responses to complex problems of practice.

PUBLICATIONS

Schnoor, S. (2026). Hidden assets: Student and teacher introverts. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 107(5-6), 56-60.

MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

Schnoor, S. (2026). Leading restorative change in schools: Principal meaning-making and the institutionalisation of restorative justice practices. Manuscript submitted for publication to *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, July 2026.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Schnoor, S. (2025, October). *Principal leadership and restorative justice: Creating the conditions for true transformation*. International Restorative Justice Conference, Governors State University, University Park, IL. [Peer-reviewed]

Schnoor, S. (2025, June). *Restorative leadership: Principal practices and student-led tools for transformative change*. Chicago Southland Educator Consortium, Governors State University, University Park, IL. [Peer-reviewed]

Schnoor, S. (2025, April). *A critical participatory arts-based investigation of superintendent leadership and stakeholder sense of belonging*. Research Days, Governors State University, University Park, IL. [Invited]

Schnoor, S. (2025, March). *Whose course is it anyway? Co-constructing learning with students*. Spring Faculty Professional Development Day, Governors State University, University Park, IL. [Invited]

MEDIA

Schnoor, S. (2024, December). *Principal leadership and restorative practices* [Audio podcast episode]. In A. Vujaklija and J. Patterson (Hosts), *Teaching and learning: Theory vs. practice with Dr. Amy and Dr. Joi*. Center for Community Media, Governors State University. [Podcast episode](#)

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Principal | Homewood School District 153 - Homewood, IL July 2020-2024

- Led a 600-student school in a diverse district, advancing equitable instructional practices and student outcomes.
- Designed and implemented instructional coaching and data-informed improvement cycles to strengthen teaching and learning.
- Developed inclusive multi-tiered systems of support that improved attendance and reduced behavioral referrals.
- Partnered with educators, families, and district leaders to foster belonging and continuous improvement.

Assistant Principal | Community Consolidated School District 146 - Tinley Park, IL July 2018-2020

- Supported instructional leadership and professional learning for educators in a diverse PK-8 district.
- Facilitated data-informed practices and systems that improved student outcomes and reduced discipline incidents.
- Designed and delivered professional development on assessment literacy and culturally responsive practice.

Principal | Humboldt Unified School District - Prescott Valley, AZ July 2016-2018

- Led school-wide improvement focused on instructional quality, curriculum alignment, and inclusive practices for diverse learners.
- Developed educators through coaching, observation, and feedback cycles that strengthened culturally responsive instruction.
- Implemented restorative and student-centered approaches to discipline, improving school climate and reducing behavioral referrals.
- Strengthened family and community engagement to support a more inclusive and connected school environment.

Assistant Principal | Greenville County School District - Greenville, SC July 2011-2016

- Supported instructional programs, inclusive practices, and school-climate initiatives in diverse school settings.
- Collaborated with educators to improve teaching, learning, and student engagement.

Teacher, Coach, and Program Sponsor | Illinois and South Carolina Schools 2003-2011

- Provided instruction across elementary, middle, and high school settings in urban and diverse communities.
- Coached athletics and led student activities that fostered teamwork, leadership, and engagement.

Summer Program Director | Project Morry - Port Chester, NY Summers 2001-2011

- Led youth-development programming serving students from historically underserved communities in the New York metropolitan area.
- Designed culturally responsive programming focused on identity, belonging, and student voice.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

National

- Peer Reviewer, American Educational Research Association, 2025
- Member, American Educational Research Association - Educational Change and Eisner SIGs
- Member, International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership

State

- LEAD Pipeline Reviewer, Illinois Principals Association, 2025
- Member, Illinois Principals Association
- Member, Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration

University

- Institutional Strategic Planning 2030 Working Group
- Dissertation Committees
- Professional Development Committee

LICENSURE AND PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

- Illinois State Board of Education Professional Educator License: Music K-12; Principal K-12; Superintendent PK-22; Illinois Teacher and Principal Evaluator