

April 26, 2024

Okeechobee County School Board
700 SW 2nd Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34972

Dear School Board Members,

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Superintendent of Schools, to serve and support the students and families of Okeechobee County. A quality education has the power to transform lives, and with a belief that every child deserves a fair shot to reach their potential I am eager to build on the successes of Okeechobee County Schools and to create new opportunities for the students, families, instructors and all staff within the district.

As a proven leader in the educational arena, I am uniquely positioned to energize our community, build upon our strengths and act on our opportunities for innovation and growth. Priorities for our district and the superintendent need to include such areas as successfully preparing for the Florida Benchmark for Excellence Student Thinking (BEST) standards and corresponding accountability measures, accelerating academic student performance, preparing each student for the next chapter as they progress through their educational career in our schools, promoting the excellent programs that currently exist, and provide awareness of what comes next after completing Okeechobee High School. We must continue to evolve at a pace faster than the growth of our community.

The accomplishments during my career have been a direct result of working collaboratively, listening to others, empowering and building teams, and focusing on results. The next superintendent needs to be a strong instructional leader, and one who is extraordinarily committed to creating conditions for teachers and students to thrive for academic excellence. Cultivating teams to develop consistent systems and initiatives that establish these conditions, while also being grounded in the instructional practices and meeting student needs. I commit to the Board, the employees of the school district, and the community nothing short of excellence. With experience that has increased opportunities for students K-12 and post-secondary, I am excited to strengthen the reputation and the respect of our educational system. It is both my belief and experience that all children can learn and excel at the highest level with the appropriate supports, guidance, and relevant learning resources. This belief guided my work to lead strategic planning for high expectations for student learning as well as social and emotional well-being. I am proud to have played a critical leadership role in the development and implementation of practices that have narrowed the achievement gaps for all students including those of diverse backgrounds and have had a profound positive impact on the neighborhoods they reside. I worked with school communities to use data and local experiences to identify needs and devise strategies based on prioritization of those needs. I have also worked with Board members to analyze trends and help create policies and a legislative agenda that advocates for resources that strengthen schools and programs. My experience in achieving gains in graduation rates, academic achievement, equity initiatives, providing safe learning and instructional environments, and to provide the structure so that teaching and learning are fun, will be used as a template as we take this district to the next level. While leveraging my expertise in valuing staff and a deep commitment to serving students, families and our community I am

ready to meet the challenges and build an even stronger district through systems, processes and structures while attracting and retaining high quality teachers and improving opportunities for all students.

I believe in leading a transparent, accountable and efficient school system that is responsive to community needs and values. The fit for the teachers, staff, students and families of Okeechobee must desire to serve as your next superintendent is personal, my connections to the Okeechobee community are deep and my proven ability to yield positive results demonstrates the skillset needed to lead this district that I am proud to call home. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my desire and qualifications with you all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russ Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Russ Brown

Russell Paul Brown
Okeechobee, FL / 772-285-9914 / rband3@yahoo.com

Education: Certification program, Florida Atlantic University, Educational Leadership

Masters of Education, University of North Florida, School Guidance/Counseling

Bachelor of Science, University of Central Florida, Physical Education

Work Experience: **2011-present Indian River State College**
Campus President, Dixon Hendry Campus,
Okeechobee, FL

- Program and class scheduling
- Implemented Quick Job Training offerings for the purpose of strengthening the local talent pool for workforce employment
- Staff recruitment, hiring, evaluation, scheduling, dismissal
- Grant applications and project coordination for programs specific meet the needs of Okeechobee students
- Develop/maintain community partnerships
- College focused presentations to community groups
- Creation, host student centered events and activities
- Budget development, implementation and oversight
- Established computer loaner program with a partnership
- Implemented free babysitting service for students taking night classes
- Acquire funds for student emergencies and getting started needs

2007-2011 Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School
CEO/Principal; Okeechobee, FL

- Initial opening and start of school, staffing, curriculum, facilities, budget, policies and procedures, student and staff resources, scheduling, expectations, strategic planning, community engagement
- School grade of 'A' first year
- Expansion of School to include grades 6-8 from grades K-5
- Coordinate the teachings of Seminole Tribe history, culture and language within the school day for all students
- Physical Education every day for all students

- Nutrition based meals, breakfast and lunch for students and staff

2003-2007 Okeechobee County Public Schools

Elementary Assistant Principal, Middle School Principal, Director of Student Services; Okeechobee, FL

- Re-allocated funds to provide classroom sets of laptops for all classes
- First Principal in Okeechobee County to implement the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program with the partnership of the Director of ESE
- Restructured policies and procedures for district wide Student Services to focus on student success at all ages and grade levels
- Provide training for all student services staff throughout the district
- Team building on school sites, structure positive work environment, provide support for all staff
- Create opportunities for parent and family involvement with their children(s) school

Community Involvement: Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation, Board Member, Executive Committee, 2018 – Present

HCA Florida Raulerson Hospital, Board Member, 2016 – Present

Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce, Board Member, Executive Committee, 2012 – Present

Education Foundation of Okeechobee, Board Member, Executive Committee, 2011 – Present

CareerSource Heartland Executive Board, Board Member, 2011 - Present

Patricia G. Cooper, Ed.D.

267 SW 77th Terrace

Okeechobee, Fl 34974

School Board of Okeechobee County, Florida

700 SW 2nd Ave

Okeechobee, Florida 34974

RE: RUSSELL BROWN

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It is indeed my personal and professional pleasure to submit to you this letter of recommendation for the above-named RUSSELL BROWN, an applicant for the position of Superintendent of Schools .

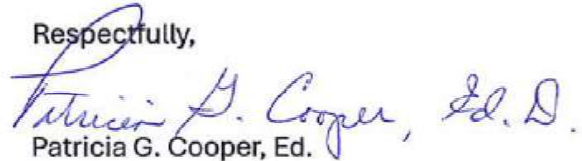
I first met and began a working relationship with Mr. Brown in 2004 when I became Superintendent of Schools in Okeechobee County, Florida. At that time in his career, Mr. Brown was a school administrator in the district. My closest observation of Mr. Brown was in his position of Director of Student Services, during which time he demonstrated his ability to organize, plan and deliver the daily duties of this position which included close adherence to the policies of the School Board, dealing with sometimes irate and upset parents, and communicating decisions regarding students directly to the School Board.

Mr. Brown continuously projected himself as a true educational professional with the best interests of students and the school district always the main focus of his actions. My further observation of Mr. Brown included his commitment to this community. His involvement and leadership beyond the school district were obvious as he participated in a variety of local organizations, always representing the school district professionally and meaningfully.

As a former Superintendent of Schools, knowing the demands of this position, I have no doubt that Mr. Brown has not only the ability but the "heart" to be very successful in the position for which he is applying. His skills both within the school district and beyond include: strategic planning; financial responsibility; community engagement; and, his proven ability to be an educational leader, greatly respected within and beyond the boundaries of the School District of Okeechobee.

It is therefore my distinct pleasure to highly recommend Mr. Brown for the position of Superintendent of Schools in Okeechobee County, Florida. Please contact me for any additional information you might need to move forward in your selection.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia G. Cooper, Ed.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Patricia G. Cooper, Ed.
Retired Superintendent



INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

Okeechobee County School Board
Southwest 2nd Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34974

Dear Okeechobee County School Board Members:

It is a pleasure, and a privilege, to recommend Russell Brown for the position of Superintendent of Okeechobee County Schools. I have known Russ for more than four decades—as a friend of the family, as a classmate in Okeechobee schools (though Russ was three years my junior), as the son of our family doctor, and revered Okeechobee institution, Dr. Fred Brown. Russ was always mature beyond his years, poised and quietly self-assured. An accomplished student and athlete, Russ deferred the spotlight, instead redirecting attention and praise toward his peers and teammates. In a world where self-promotion has become a virtue, Russ is a refreshing throwback, a man who lets his (considerable) accomplishments speak for themselves.

Russ brings this same others-first humility and quiet confidence to his professional work. For the last thirteen years, Russ has led the Dixon-Hendry Campus of IRSC with a steady hand and a clear vision. As a dedicated educator, Russ has overseen the college's instructional programs, managed the facilities and budgets, and been a tireless advocate for the college in the community. Under his leadership, the college has seen gains in each area of the educational "trinity": enrollment, retention, and completion. As an instructor in the classroom, I can attest to benefits of these gains—exploding enrollments, improved resources for students and faculty, and a welcoming, collegial learning environment.

Addressing a long under-resourced need, Russ has pioneered Workforce programs at Dixon-Hendry, including HVAC, welding, automotive technology, and nursing programs. He has championed the Pioneer Program in Okeechobee, leading to impressive gains in enrollment and changing hundreds of students' lives in the process. He has also fostered the Dual Enrollment program at the college, a success story in its own right. For years before Russ's tenure as Campus President, instructors were promised that DE students would be bussed to the college from OHS so that they could receive the full college experience and uninterrupted instruction; for years that promise went unfulfilled. In a matter of months after his arrival at the college,

Russ made this vision a reality, untangling the Gordian knot of bussing timetables and instructional scheduling. As a result, what had been fairly quiet and sparsely attended morning sessions at the college have turned into bustling, lively, energized gatherings (complete with piano and ping pong), a benefit to the students and the college alike.

Russ possesses both a wide-ranging vision of education in the community and a hands-on attention to detail of the day-to-day workings of the college. He has facilitated a close partnership with the Seminole Tribe, and fostered judicious program development and land acquisition with an eye toward the community's 21st century educational trajectory. At the same time, he is a student-centered educator, attentive to individual student needs and concerns. Last semester I had a student with disabilities who used a wheelchair, and Russ personally made sure that the classroom would accommodate her, rearranging tables and chairs, and even storing her wheelchair in his office to make things as easy as possible for her—one small example of his kindness and concern for students.

Given his vision, his leadership, his deep commitment to education in this community, Russ is an ideal candidate for the position of superintendent of schools. Russ possesses a rare combination of skills and experiences for the job: he is both an educational innovator who would bring fresh and relevant ideas to the role, and a long-standing resident of Okeechobee with deep community ties and life-long relationships here. His entire life, one might say, has prepared him for this job.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hank Raulerson", with a stylized, flowing script.

Hank Raulerson
Assistant Professor
Indian River State College
863.624.6007
hraulers@irsc.edu



PEMAYETV EMAHAKV CHARTER SCHOOL
100 EAST HARNEY POND ROAD
OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA 34974
Phone 863-467-2501
Fax 863-467-8610
www.ourwayschool.org

Dear Members of the Okeechobee County School Board,

I hope this letter finds you well. It is with great enthusiasm and genuine conviction that I write to you today to wholeheartedly recommend Russ Brown for the position of Superintendent within the Okeechobee County School District.

I had the distinct pleasure of working closely with Russ during his tenure as Principal of Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, a public charter school affiliated with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, where I served as his administrative assistant. Throughout our time together, Russ's leadership shone brightly, guiding our team with compassion, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to the success and well-being of every member of our school community.

Russ's genuine concern for the social and emotional development and success of each individual under his care was evident in every decision he made. His approachability and empathy created a nurturing and inclusive educational environment where students, staff, and parents felt valued, respected, and supported. His experience, particularly in a collaborative partnership with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, underscores his dedication to fostering an environment where every voice is heard and every individual is embraced, regardless of background or circumstance.

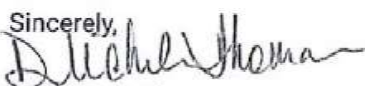
Russ's leadership style is characterized by integrity, accountability, and a deep-rooted belief in the power of collaboration. He fosters open communication, encourages creativity, and leads by example, inspiring those around him to strive for excellence. His ability to navigate complex challenges with grace and humility, coupled with his unwavering commitment to upholding the highest standards of education, make him an exceptional candidate for the role of Superintendent.

Moreover, Russ's intimate knowledge of the Okeechobee County School System is unmatched. Having worked as a guidance counselor, assistant principal, principal, and Director of Student Services all within the Okeechobee County school system, he possesses a unique perspective and comprehensive understanding of the district's needs, challenges, and opportunities. This firsthand experience equips him with invaluable insights that will enable him to hit the ground running and make meaningful, informed decisions that benefit students, staff, and the community as a whole.

Furthermore, Russ's experience as the Provost of Indian River State College provides him with a unique opportunity to capitalize on partnerships and resources within the higher education sector. His leadership in this role has allowed him to establish strong connections with colleges and universities, creating pathways for graduating students to seamlessly transition to higher education, pursue career and technical education certificates, and access a wide range of post-secondary opportunities. Russ's vision for educational excellence extends beyond the K-12 system, encompassing a comprehensive approach to student success that spans from early childhood to adulthood.

In conclusion, I am confident in Russ Brown's ability to excel as Superintendent within the Okeechobee County School District. His extensive experience, exemplary leadership skills, and genuine commitment to educational excellence make him the ideal candidate for this important position. I wholeheartedly endorse Russ and urge you to consider him for this role without hesitation.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or clarification regarding Russ's qualifications or character. Thank you for considering my heartfelt recommendation.

Sincerely,

D. Michele Thomas



RUSSELL PAUL BROWN
909 SE 14 COURT
OKEECHOBEE, FL 34974

Florida DOE Number: 603758
Applicant ID Number: [REDACTED]
Processing Date: 04/09/2024
Expiration Date: 07/02/2025
Application Number: 1628170

Your application for a Florida Educator Certificate covering EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP (ALL LEVELS), was received on 04/02/2024. Further processing of your application is pending.

Your application will remain valid until 07/02/2025.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

1 UNF Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32224

PERMANENT ACADEMIC RECORD

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits releasing this information to a third party without the student's written consent and requires disposal of said information to be done in a secure and non-compromising manner.

Student ID N00057207

Date of Birth: 10-AUG

Date Issued: 17-APR-2024

Page: 1

Record of: Russell Paul Brown

Current Name: Russell Paul Brown

Issued To: Russell Brown

Parchment DocumentID: TE384U1D

Course Level: Graduate

Current Program

Master of Education

College : Education and Human Services

Major : Counselor Education

Comments:

Completed a state approved performance-based program in Guidance (K-12) at the masters level.

Degrees Awarded Master of Education 06-MAY-1989

Ehrs: 33.00 GPA-Hrs: 33.00 QPts: 111.00 GPA: 3.36

Primary Degree

Major : Counselor Education

SUBJ NO.	COURSE TITLE	CRED GRD	PTS R
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SUBJ NO.	COURSE TITLE	CRED GRD	PTS R
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Institution Information continued:

Fall 1988

EEH 6911	Hum Res Devel	3.00 A	12.00
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EGC 6905	Org Adm Guid Ser	3.00 A	12.00
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Ehrs: 6.00 GPA-Hrs: 6.00 QPts: 24.00 GPA: 4.00

Good Standing

Spring 1989

EGC 6446	Practicum In Counsel	3.00 A	12.00
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Ehrs: 3.00 GPA-Hrs: 3.00 QPts: 12.00 GPA: 4.00

Good Standing

INSTITUTION CREDIT:

Fall 1987

EDF 6480	Qual/Qunt Fnd Ed Rsh	3.00 C	6.00
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EGC 6226	Apraisl Technique II	3.00 A	12.00
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Ehrs: 6.00 GPA-Hrs: 6.00 QPts: 18.00 GPA: 3.00

Good Standing

Spring 1988

EGC 6225	Apprsl Proc/Gui&Coun	3.00 B	9.00
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EGC 6436	Indiv Coun:Ed/Hu Ser	3.00 B	9.00
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Ehrs: 6.00 GPA-Hrs: 6.00 QPts: 18.00 GPA: 3.00

Good Standing

Summer 1988

EDA 6215	School/Community Rel	3.00 B	9.00
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EDF 6165	Human Resources Devl	3.00 W	0.00
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EDG 5935	Sem:Invtnng Sch Suces	3.00 A	12.00
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EGC 6306	Car Guid Resources	3.00 B	9.00
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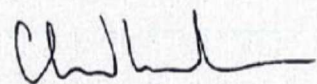
EGC 6565	Grp Mthds/Coun-Guid	3.00 B	9.00
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Ehrs: 12.00 GPA-Hrs: 12.00 QPts: 39.00 GPA: 3.25

Good Standing

***** CONTINUED ON NEXT COLUMN *****

***** TRANSCRIPT TOTALS *****				
	Earned Hrs	GPA Hrs	Points	GPA
TOTAL INSTITUTION	33.00	33.00	111.00	3.36
TOTAL TRANSFER	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OVERALL	33.00	33.00	111.00	3.36
***** END OF TRANSCRIPT *****				


Chad Learch, Registrar

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

1 UNF Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32224

PERMANENT ACADEMIC RECORD

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits releasing this information to a third party without the student's written consent and requires disposal of said information to be done in a secure and non-compromising manner.

Student ID N00057207

Date of Birth: 10-AUG

Date Issued: 17-APR-2024

Record of: Russell Paul Brown

Page: 1

Current Name: Russell Paul Brown

Issued To: Russell Brown

Parchment DocumentID: TE384U1D

Course Level: Undergraduate

Current Program

Not a Degree Program

College : University

Major : Non-Degree Seeking

SUBJ NO.	COURSE TITLE	CRED GRD	PTS R
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TRANSFER CREDIT ACCEPTED BY THE INSTITUTION:

FL1988FL1994 Florida Atlantic University

EDA 6201	Business Mgmt In Ed	3.00 A	
EDA 6205	Education Management	3.00 A	
EDA 6232	Education And The La	3.00 A	
EDA 6931	Special Topics Grad	3.00 A	
EDG 5935	Seminar In Curriculu	3.00 A	
EDG 6255	Inst Prog Develop	3.00 A	
EDS 6100	Leadership	3.00 B	
EDS 6160	Personnel Dev In Edu	3.00 A	
EME 6426	Admin Applica Ed Tec	3.00 A	
ESE 6215	Senior High Sch Curr	3.00 A	
NON 6426	Admin Applica Ed Tec	3.00 NC	

Shrs: 30.00 GPA-Hrs: 30.00 Qpts: 117.00 GPA: 3.90

INSTITUTION CREDIT:

Summer 1987

EGC 6106	Lrng Thry Guid Pract	3.00 B	9.00
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Shrs: 3.00 GPA-Hrs: 3.00 Qpts: 9.00 GPA: 3.00

Good Standing

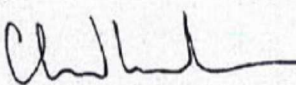
***** TRANSCRIPT TOTALS *****

	Earned Hrs	GPA Hrs	Points	GPA
TOTAL INSTITUTION	3.00	3.00	9.00	3.00

TOTAL TRANSFER	30.00	30.00	117.00	3.90
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OVERALL	33.00	33.00	126.00	3.82
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***** END OF TRANSCRIPT *****


Chad Learch, Registrar