

Brenda Cassellius Professional Bio

Dr. Brenda Cassellius has spent three decades as an educator devoted to helping all children succeed and thrive. Most recently as Minnesota's commissioner of education she worked to enact comprehensive education reforms that benefited every child throughout the state. Her straightforward, community-driven approach resulted in a remarkable list of accomplishments, including historic new funding for schools, the enactment of all-day kindergarten, state-funded preschool for 25,000 three and four year old children, and the highest high school graduation rates on record.

A respected educator throughout her profession and across partisan lines, Dr. Cassellius is best known for her unrelenting advocacy and commitment to ensuring all children are given an equitable and excellent education. While commissioner, she served on the board of directors for the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and contributed to the development of their 10 Equity Commitments, which state education chiefs across the nation have adopted to further equity goals and outcomes.

Since starting her career in 1990 as a special education paraprofessional, she moved on to roles as a classroom teacher, administrator and superintendent in school systems in Minnesota and Tennessee. She's successfully led redesign and change efforts that put students first, focus on achievement and have resulted in better outcomes for all students. She believes change can happen quickly if it is purposeful, collaborative, and grounded in effective strategies, and her record has proven that belief to be true.

Prior to serving as commissioner, Dr. Cassellius was the superintendent of the East Metro Integration District, where she led an integration and achievement agenda with 10 East Metro school district superintendents. She also served as an associate superintendent in the Minneapolis Public School District, where she led 19 middle and high schools and was responsible for the implementation of the Minneapolis Secondary Redesign; and as academic superintendent of middle schools in Memphis, Tennessee where she was responsible for middle school and district reforms that led to accelerated gains, narrowed achievement gaps, and the end of corporal punishment.

Dr. Cassellius is married to Jason and is celebrating her 20th anniversary this year. She is the proud mother of three children, Christian Michel, Ani Grace, and Charles Justice. Outside of work, she enjoys playing hockey, water skiing, and spending time with family and friends.