

**CANDIDATE FILE**

**FOR**

**PAOLO DEMARIA**



**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

***State Superintendent of Public***

***Instruction Search***

***2015-16***

Mr. Paolo DeMaria



State Board of Education -- Ohio  
Superintendent Search Committee  
25 S. Front St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Position Opening – Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dear Members of the Committee,

When it was first suggested to me that I submit my name as a candidate to be Ohio’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, I quickly dismissed the idea. I am very happy in my current job. I get to work with super-smart people on projects that reflect leading-edge education reforms with clients that are among the most forward thinking in the country. I have a great deal of flexibility, and experience little in the way of conflict or tension. Having worked at the Ohio Department of Education in the past, I know that the Superintendent’s role is a highly complex one within a policy arena that is flanked by executive, legislative, stakeholder and public pressures in a highly charged environment. My natural tendency is not to seek out the spotlight – my career has generally found me in supporting roles.

The more I thought about it, though, a number of feelings and values began to change my thinking.

First of all, I love Ohio. A native of West Virginia, I came to Ohio from South Carolina over 30 years ago, and it has been home ever since. It has been where I have raised my family and built my career. I have come to appreciate the nature of the people, the beauty and variation of the geography, and the coziness of the culture. Being an Ohioan is not a transient state for me. It’s a point of pride. I want Ohio to be the best.

In terms of education, I think Ohio has everything it needs to be the best. There are so many smart, energetic, caring, vibrant people working in education as teachers, principals, superintendents, policy makers, advocates, researchers, etc. We have great schools, districts, colleges of education, research organizations and advocacy organizations. Not surprisingly, all the ingredients are there. Ohio has got what it takes.

Second, I love education policy and practice. My love is not rooted in the fact that I’m a professional educator – because I’m not. My love is rooted in my belief that there is no more important area of public policy than education. I think a cogent argument could be made that a quality education system holds promise for addressing the problems and challenges in every other public policy arena. Our ability to get education right is hugely important. It defines our future as individuals and it defines our future as a community, a state and a nation. It deserves our greatest attention and commitment to achieving excellence.

More importantly, education is the single biggest hope for addressing inequity in our society. It is sad to see the significant wealth and income disparities that persist today. Unfortunately, in education we face achievement gaps that will continue to contribute to this phenomenon unless we address them head on. Fortunately, there are examples where success is being achieved. We need to commit ourselves to doing more.

Third, I love organizational management, policy development and implementation. Sounds odd, doesn't it? I think my feelings about organizational management have as their genesis my first involvement in a school choir. The idea that dozens of voices could come together to create a sound much richer than any voice alone fascinated me. With the right coordination and understanding of the parts and objectives, what you can create is magical. I've had the good fortune to be involved in a number of highly effective organizations, and it is exciting and fulfilling. It's even more fulfilling to play a role in creating the conditions for an organization to become highly effective.

Fourth, my calling is public service. In 1984 the people of Ohio gave me a chance to work in state government – something for which I am eternally grateful. Over my 25 years of state service I developed a deep appreciation for what government is about, what it can accomplish, and the difference it can make in the interest of the public. The public service is not a place where you will become wealthy, but the satisfaction and fulfillment are incomparable.

So, adding these four things together I got much more comfortable with the idea. Consequently, I'm delighted to submit my name for your consideration.

It's an exciting time for primary and secondary education in Ohio! If we focus solely on the headlines, we're bound to miss the vast expanse of all the good things that are going on. The state has set clear expectations for what students need to know and be able to do to succeed in college, careers and life. Ohio not only has strong standards for mathematics and English language arts, but also for areas like social studies, science, foreign language, technology and fine arts. We recognize the power of creating learning environments in the context of career pathways. Ohio's multiple-measures accountability system gives schools and districts information about success from different points of view, and drives deep conversations focused on continuous improvement. We know that we have to be attentive to the needs of all students and take steps to ensure that all students have the opportunity to excel. There is a strong and widespread understanding that teachers and good teaching are the greatest contributors to student learning and consequently need to be an important point of focus. We recognize also, through efforts like the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, that building and district leadership is fundamentally important to an outstanding school system.

But we also know that Ohio isn't yet where we want it to be in terms of student achievement. Other states are judged as better than Ohio. We've developed tools and strategies, like the Ohio Improvement Process, to chart the course forward. Progress has been made, and it takes time to adapt to the many changes. There is no doubt that if we continue to commit ourselves to improvement, we can achieve excellence and be one of the top states in the nation. We owe it to our children and our future to get there.

The new federal Every Student Succeeds Act gives Ohio a wonderful opportunity to have a broadly inclusive discussion to design and implement Ohio strategies to address Ohio's challenges and serve Ohio's children. The conversations that the state will have need to challenge us to hold ourselves to

high expectations for what we can and will do to improve. The focus will not simply need to be on programs, but on processes and continuous improvement dispositions as well.

I'd like to play a leadership role in helping Ohio reach the goal of educational system excellence.

As part of this application you will find my resume. It summarizes my past experiences and accomplishments, and will give you an idea of what I can bring to the position. To summarize in a few words, I am a servant leader, a hard worker and quick learner, a team and partnership builder, a believer in the power of engaging others in creating solutions and implementing strategies, a strategic thinker, a thoughtful and driven implementer, an honest and respectful listener and communicator, someone who values diverse thinking and contribution, and someone who will bring passion and vision to the work.

Also, as part of this application, you'll find several letters of recommendation from people that have had experience with my work. They are thoughtful people who I greatly admire. But as you formulate your impression of me, I ask that you reach out to others. There are plenty of people who are easily accessible that can give you impressions of me and my work. I encourage you to talk to them. A number of them are in the Department of Education and the Department of Higher Education. Many work in the field of education or serve in other parts of the public sector. I'm hopeful that what you will hear will primarily be good, but one doesn't work in government as long as I have without having a few detractors. All perspectives are valuable as you deliberate your selection.

I welcome the opportunity to share with you more about my knowledge and skills, and how I can make a significant contribution to the work of the State Board of Education and the Ohio Department of Education. Please let me know if I can provide you with additional information for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Paolo DeMaria

**Application for State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Ohio Department of Education**

**Name:** DeMaria Paolo A. **Date:** 4/8/2016  
Last First Middle

**Address:** [REDACTED] **E-mail:** [REDACTED]  
Street City State Zip

**Phone:** [REDACTED] **Fax:** [REDACTED]  
Home Business Cell

**Present Position:** Principal Consultant **School District:** Education First Consulting, LLC

**District Enrollment:** NA **Number of Certified/Classified Staff:** NA

**Annual Budget:** NA **Annual Base Salary (including any annuity):** \$140,000

**Educational Record**

Name and Location of Institution Attended:	Year(s):	Degree:	Major(s):	Minors(s):
The Ohio State University Columbus, OH	1996	M.P.A	Public Administration	
Furman University Greenville, SC	1984	B.A.	Political Science/Economics	

- Do you hold a superintendent license for this position?  YES  NO
- Are you eligible for a superintendent license for this position?  YES  NO

**Professional Memberships/Recent Community Activities**

*Indicate leadership responsibilities relevant to the position.*

## Employment Experience

List in consecutive order beginning with the most recent position.

Dates	Position/Institution/Location	Supervisor's Name/Title	Supervisor's Phone
To: Present	Position Principal Consultant	Name Jennifer Vranek	(Business)
From: Nov. 2010	Institution/Location Education First Consulting, LLC	Title Founding Partner	(Home)
Reason For Leaving (Please be specific) This is my present employment			District Enrollment NA
To: Nov. 2010	Position Executive Vice Chancellor	Name Eric Fingerhut	(Business)
From: Nov. 2008	Institution/Location Ohio Department of Higher Education (formerly Ohio Board of Regents), Columbus, OH	Title Former Chancellor	(Home)
Reason For Leaving (Please be specific) Accepted position at Education First Consulting			District Enrollment NA
To: Nov. 2008	Position Assoc. Superintendent for School Options and Finance	Name Susan Zelman	(Business)
From: Feb. 2004	Institution/Location Ohio Department of Education, Columbus, OH	Title Former Superintendent	(Home)
Reason For Leaving (Please be specific) Accepted position with Ohio Department of Higher Education			District Enrollment NA
To: Feb. 2004	Position Chief Policy Advisor/Director of Cabinet Affairs	Name Jon Allison	(Business)
From: Feb. 2000	Institution/Location Office of the Governor -- State of Ohio, Columbus, OH	Title Former Chief of Staff	(Home)
Reason For Leaving (Please be specific) Accepted position at Ohio Department of Education			District Enrollment NA

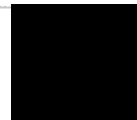
## References

Provide the names of four persons who can discuss your experience and qualifications in detail.

Name/Official Position	Business Phone	Home Phone	Cell Phone
Jennifer Vranek Founding Partner, Education First Consulting	206-529- 4249		
Bob Taft Former Governor, State of Ohio; Currently Distinguished	937-229- 4012		

Research Associate, Univ. of Dayton

R. Gregory Browning  
Former Director, Ohio Office of Budget and Management;  
Currently CEO, Capital Partners



David Varda  
Executive Director, Ohio Association of School Business  
Officials

(614)  
431-9116

## Background Check and Information

*In addition to the following information, a thorough background check may be made at the option of the employer.*

*If "YES" is selected in response to any question, please provide a detailed explanation.*

*"YES" answers to the following questions will not necessarily result in denial of an offer of employment. The employer will consider all the circumstances, including the date and nature of events that have led to the actions described below. Your written explanation will assist the employer in determining your eligibility and suitability for an offer of employment.*

---

1. Have you ever been convicted of, admitted committing, pleaded no contest, or are you awaiting trial for any crime (excluding only minor traffic violations that do not involve any allegations of alcohol, drugs or reckless driving) or have any civil charges previously or pending involving allegations of child abuse or spousal abuse? You must answer "YES" if true, even if the matter was later dismissed, deferred, reversed, or vacated. If you answer "YES" you must provide dates of the proceedings, the name and address of the court where the proceedings occurred, a statement of the accusation against you and the final disposition of the case(s).

**NO**     **YES**, please explain below

2. Have you ever been dismissed (fired) from any job, or resigned at the request of or pressure from your employer, or left employment while charges against you or an investigation of your behavior was pending or been refused tenure, reappointment or continuing contract from any employer? You must answer "YES" if true, even if the matter was later resolved with any form of settlement or severance agreement, regardless of its terms. If you answer "YES" you must provide the date of termination or resignation and other action concerning tenure reappointment or continuing contract denial and the name, address and telephone number of the employer(s) and a statement of the alleged reasons for termination or resignation.

**NO**     **YES**, please explain below

3. Have you ever had any license or certificate of any kind (teaching certificate or other professional license) revoked, suspended, or reprimanded, or have you in any way been sanctioned by or is any charge or complaint now pending against you before any licensing, certification or other regulatory agency or body, public or private? If you answer "YES" you must provide the dates of proceedings, name, address and telephone number of the agency or body where proceedings took place, a statement of the accusations against you, the final disposition and/or status of the charge or complaint.

**NO**     **YES**, please explain below

4. Are you now being investigated for any alleged misconduct or other alleged grounds for discipline by any licensing, certification or other regulatory body (teacher certification or otherwise) or by your current or any previous employer? If you answer "YES" you must provide the name, address and telephone number of the employer or licensing body and statement of the accusation against you.

**NO**     **YES**, please explain below

5. Have you ever been involved, or are you currently involved, or do you anticipate involvement in litigation either as the plaintiff/complainant or defendant/respondent?

**NO**     **YES**, please explain below

6. Have you ever filed a grievance/complaint of any kind against an employer?

**NO**     **YES**, please explain below



## Verification Statement

*(Please read carefully and sign the statement below)*

The information in the Application for Employment is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I have answered all questions to the best of my ability and I have not withheld any information that would unfavorably affect my application for employment. I acknowledge that any misrepresentation or omission of any fact in my application, resume, or any other materials, or during any interviews, may be the cause for my rejection from employment or may result in my subsequent dismissal if I am hired.

Paolo A. DeMaria

4/8/2016

*Signature*

*Date*

I request that my application file remain confidential pursuant to and in accordance with the State laws. If I am interviewed, I request that it be held in a closed session pursuant to State laws. For your information to be reviewed by the Board in closed session, your signature and date is required.

Paolo A. DeMaria

4/8/2016

*Signature*

*Date*

Please Direct All Inquiries,  
Applications and Supporting Materials To:

### **Ray and Associates, Inc.**

4403 First Avenue SE, Suite 407  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402-3221  
319-393-3115 Phone  
319-393-4931 Fax  
E-mail: [glr@rayassoc.com](mailto:glr@rayassoc.com)  
Website: [www.rayassoc.com](http://www.rayassoc.com)

DO NOT CONTACT THE DISTRICT OR BOARD MEMBERS DIRECTLY

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 8, 2016**

Neither the client nor any member of Ray and Associates, Inc. discriminate on the basis of disability, race, religion, sex, national origin, or age in access to, employment in, or in the provision of any programs, benefits or activities.

# Paolo A. DeMaria

## Employment

2010-present

### **Principal Consultant – Education First Consulting**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Serves as a member of the management leadership team for a mid-size consulting firm specializing in education policy and implementation.

- Serves as project-level accountable principal providing broad oversight for wide-ranging projects in K-12 and higher education policy, implementation and strategic planning.
- Manages complex projects and delivers high quality results and products. Products include written reports, meeting facilitation, strategic planning services, thought partnership, policy analyses, etc.
- Provides expert assistance in areas of college and career readiness, K-12 education reform, college completion, higher education reform, school funding, strategic planning and implementation, and grant writing.

2008 2010

### **Executive Vice Chancellor – State of Ohio Ohio Board of Regents**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Responsible for the overall coordination of agency strategic planning and implementation including oversight of the implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Higher Education* (March 2008).

- Developed policies and workplans for various strategic initiatives including textbook affordability, workforce development, data collection and use, and college readiness.
- Served as liaison with college and university administrators with regard to a variety of strategic initiatives.
- Supported agency budget development and advocacy efforts.
- Provided oversight of the implementation of special projects for the agency.

2004-2008

### **Associate Superintendent for School Options and Finance – State of Ohio Department of Education**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Responsible for the operation of the Center for School Options and Finance within the Ohio Department of Education.

- Member of the Department senior management team which implemented the strategic plan and goals of the agency as set by the Superintendent and State Board of Education.

- Supervised 75+ member unit performing computations and processing of over \$7 billion annually in payments to school districts and other entities.
- Developed policies, rules and proposed statutory changes regarding all aspects of education finance and options, including community schools and vouchers.
- Directed the production and release of the 2007-08 state, district, and building report cards which included, for the first time, the use of value added computations.
- Coordinated presentations, outreach efforts and communications to school treasurers and other school finance stakeholders.
- Advocated with legislators, Governor's Office, and other state and local government agencies.

2000-2004

**Chief Policy Advisor/Director of Cabinet Affairs – State of Ohio  
Office of the Governor**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Responsible for the operation of the Policy Section of the Office of the Governor. Managed the development and implementation of the Governor's policy agenda.

- Directed activities of the 12 member policy staff.
- Substantially responsible for the following policy areas: education finance and standards-based reform, higher education, workforce development, budget and financial management.
- Served as Governor's Office liaison to the Governor's Commission on Student Success, Governor's Commission on Teaching Success, Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy, and Blue Ribbon Task Force for Financing Student Success.
- Served as the Governor's liaison to the State Workforce Policy Board.
- Developed policy positions. Researched and wrote policy papers and other documents.
- Interacted with members of the Governor's cabinet and other senior staff members on policy development and implementation, and strategic issue intervention.
- Interacted with members of the General Assembly, legislative committees, members of Congress, and congressional staff in promoting the Governor's policy agenda.

1999 - 2000

**Senior Resident Advisor – Barents Group, LLC**

*Assignment in Yerevan, Armenia; Headquartered in McLean, Virginia*

As part of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Tax and Fiscal Reform Project team, served in the Republic of Armenia as resident Senior Budget and Fiscal Reform Advisor.

- Interacted with, and advised counterparts within the Ministry of Finance.
- Provided critical analyses, recommendations, and implementation assistance regarding budget process re-engineering and other fiscal reform issues.
- Developed procedures and prototypes for a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and assisted with MTEF development.

- Worked closely with other donor organization representatives (U.S. Treasury, International Monetary Fund, World Bank) to coordinate budget reform activities.
- Provided training presentations on budget process issues.

1998 - 1999

**Director - State of Ohio/Office of Budget and Management**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Performed duties as the Chief Financial Officer for the State of Ohio and its annual budget of over \$35 billion. Responsibilities included oversight of 110 member team performing all budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting functions, and associated management information systems.

- Frequently interacted, as member of Governor's cabinet, with Governor and Governor's Office staff regarding broad fiscal policy and other priority policy issues.
- Developed and guided the implementation of agency strategic plan, goals and objectives, and chaired agency's Quality Steering Committee.
- Led development of policy and implementation action plans for budget development, transaction accounting, and financial reporting functions.
- Coordinated and managed activities of senior management team.
- Served as member of Ohio's School Facilities Commission.
- Interacted with wide variety of interest groups including those representing local governments, primary education, higher education, health care, etc.

1991 - 1998

**Assistant Director - State of Ohio/Office of Budget and Management**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Responsible for assisting the director and serving in his absence. Primarily assigned to manage the development of executive operating and capital budget proposals and the implementation of enacted budgets for the State of Ohio.

- Supervised budget development and implementation section of 30 people.
- Successfully guided OBM's effort to attain the Government Finance Officers' Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.
- Facilitated fiscal problem resolution for state agencies.
- Served as liaison with legislature, Governor's office, and various interest groups.
- Facilitated implementation of total quality processes within the agency.
- Assisted with development and implementation of agency strategic goals and objectives.

1988 - 1991

**Senior Fiscal Analyst - State of Ohio/The Ohio Senate**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Responsible for the preparation and development of Senate majority caucus budget proposals as well as providing fiscal information, research and analysis.

## **Education**

1996

### **Ohio State University/School of Public Policy and Management**

*Columbus, Ohio*

Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.), June 1996. Studies emphasized fiscal administration and strategic management/leadership. Inducted into Phi Kappa Phi and Pi Alpha Alpha honor societies.

1984

### **Furman University**

*Greenville, South Carolina*

Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude, June 1984. Political Science and Economics majors. Ullmer Political Science Award recipient. Inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and Pi Gamma Mu honor societies.

## **Awards and Honors**

- Columbus Business First Magazine: 20 to Know in Education (March 15, 2013).
- The Ohio State University Alumni Association: Distinguished State Government Service Award, 2009.
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials: President's Award, 2006.
- Ohio Government Finance Officers Association: Timothy I. Murphy Excellence in Government Award, 2003.
- Ohio State University John Glenn School of Public Policy and Management Distinguished State/Local Government Alumnus Award, 1998.

## **References**

Available on request

## **Publications and Presentations**

- *K-12/Higher Education Alignment: An Action Agenda for Increasing Student Success*. Written with Anand Vaishnav, Katie Cristol, and Sharmila Mann for Core to College and the State Higher Education Executive Officers association (July 2015).
- *Getting Out of the Way: Education Flexibility to Boost Innovation and Improvement in Ohio*. Written with Brinton Ramsey for the Thomas B. Fordham Institute.
- *Developmental Strategies for College Readiness and Success*. Written with Mary Fulton, Matt Gianneschi and Cheryl Blanco for the Education Commission of the States (April 2014).
- *Developing and Using a Definition of College and Career Readiness*. Written with Anand Vaishnav and Katie Cristol for Core to College (Sept. 2013).
- *Engaging Higher Education in College Readiness Reforms*. Written with Anand Vaishnav and Katie Cristol for Core to College (June 2012).

- *Investing Wisely: Getting the Most From Education Spending*. Written with Heidi Guarino for Stand for Children Leadership Center (June 2012).
- *Basic Information about School Funding in Ohio – Parts 1-9*. Written and developed for the Ohio Grantmakers Forum and the Ohio House of Representatives (May 2012).

### **Other Experience and Skills**

- Ohio State University: Lecturer in School Finance, School of Educational Policy & Leadership; lecturer in Public Budgeting, Public Policy Formulation & Implementation, and Managing Public Sector Organizations, John Glenn College of Public Affairs.
- Fluent in Italian. College level knowledge of Spanish.



educationfirst  
experience | quality | results

**April 8, 2016**

**TO:** Ohio State Board of Education's Superintendent Selection Committee  
via Mary Fasbender, Ray & Associates, Inc.  
**FROM:** Jennifer Vranek, Founding Partner, Education First  
**RE:** Recommendation for Paolo DeMaria, Applicant for State Superintendent of Public Instruction

---

I wholeheartedly recommend Paolo DeMaria for the position of Ohio's State Superintendent of Public Instruction. I've worked with many state superintendents around the nation, including two of Ohio's state superintendents, and I can say without reservation that Paolo has the skills, temperament and expertise to excel in this role. He has the passion for student success, the drive to succeed, the know-how to lead a state agency and the ability to collaborate with state board members, legislators, the governor and staff, teacher union leaders, district officials, and, most importantly, students and families across Ohio.

I've had the pleasure of working with Paolo formally and informally since the late 1990s. When he served as Governor Taft's policy director and I directed state services for the bipartisan national organization Achieve, Inc., my team served as a resource for Governor Taft's academic standards and accountability commission. Paolo and I closely collaborated to ensure Achieve's advice and support accomplished Governor Taft's goals and resulting policy recommendations. Our relationship continued through Paolo's service at the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents, and my tenure as a senior grantmaker at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which included several grants to improve charter school authorizing and to support the successful passage of legislation to give all Ohio high school graduates the skills needed for success in college and career.

In 2010 I recruited Paolo to join Education First, the firm I founded in 2006, as a principal. A national education policy, practice and implementation organization with projects in nearly 40 states, we have conducted multiple projects in Ohio over the last 10 years—many led by Paolo—including projects with the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Workforce Development, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Ohio Business Roundtable, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Philanthropy Ohio, Columbus State University, Youngstown State University and others. Paolo also has led extremely successful projects for Denver Public Schools, Nashville Metro Public Schools, Stand for Children, Education Commission of the States, Complete College America, Oregon Community College Association, Lumina Foundation, and the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, to name a few. Paolo has a sterling national reputation earned through the quality of his work and his excellent advice and counsel to policymakers, educators, advocates and funders across Ohio and across the nation.

There are few people better suited to serve as Ohio's State Superintendent of Public Instruction at this moment in time than Paolo. He is a rare and extraordinary leader with serious know-how and deep relationships across the state. With 25 years of increasingly responsible positions in Ohio state government across multiple state agencies, Paolo understands the policymaking, budget development and regulatory rulemaking processes better than most. He works fluently and naturally across the aisle with legislators. In many roles he has successfully shepherded policy and budget proposals through the legislative process. He is an excellent collaborator with the governor's office, other elected officials,

---



higher education and the many state agencies that intersect with education and talent development – like the Office of Workforce Development, Office of Budget Management and others.

He also is known as a man of high integrity, trusted by Ohio’s school superintendents, school boards, school business officials, teachers, principals, education advocates and others.

To make decisions, Paolo listens carefully to educators, policymakers, staff members and other constituents; considers appropriate and available data; and employs his own very good judgment and political instincts. His decisions are thoughtful, pragmatic and innovative, and he doesn’t suffer from “analysis paralysis.” His outstanding decisionmaking coupled with his warm temperament and likable style are just a few of the many reasons people repeatedly ask to work with him over and over.

Paolo is a natural collaborator. He emphasizes finding common ground and workable solutions that always keep students at the center, while balancing the needs of educators, other leaders and other interests. He’s an excellent communicator with some of the best people skills of anyone I know working in education today. Paolo upholds the highest standards of integrity; he truly cares about the individuals who work above, with and for him; and he consistently models humility and servant leadership. Paolo is never afraid to roll up his sleeves and do the hard work to move agendas forward, bring out the best in a team and find creative solutions to tough challenges.

Still, Paolo also has the unique ability to stand his ground and defend critical decisions and guardrails in public policy. A state superintendent must be able to say no; Paolo is able to do this strongly and well.

Not only is Paolo a model leader, he also possesses extremely deep and wide content expertise in K-12 and higher education. For example, he’s considered one of a handful of Ohio’s most knowledgeable experts in school finance. Paolo believes that all young people can achieve their dreams, and he knows how to design and lead a well-rounded, inclusive and rigorous public preK-12 education system that supports young people to succeed. He’s also an expert in charter schools; school assessment; school, district and college accountability; and alignment of preK-12 expectations and policy with higher education admissions and enrollment and with workforce development. What sets him apart from many of his K-12 colleagues is that he’s also deeply knowledgeable about college access, college persistence and college completion issues of policy and practice.

As you can see, I believe Paolo is extremely talented and his leadership can make a positive difference for Ohio children. I am not anxious for Paolo to leave Education First. But our mission is to *deliver exceptional ideas, experience-based solution and results that improve our nation’s education systems so all students – particularly low-income students and students of color – are prepared for success in college, careers and life.* I can think of no better way to advance that work in Ohio than if Paolo is chosen to lead it for the nearly 2 million students of the Buckeye State.

---





April 8, 2016

Ray & Associates, Inc.  
4403 First Avenue SE, Suite 407  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to offer this recommendation in support of Paolo DeMaria's application for State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Ohio.

As Executive Director of the Ohio Educational Service Center Association, I have had the opportunity to work with Paolo DeMaria in a variety of capacities for nearly twenty years. I have worked with Paolo in his roles with the Office of Budget and Management, Office of the Governor, Ohio Board of Regents, Ohio Department of Education, and Education First.

Most recently, I had the opportunity to work with Paolo on a project for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) in which he served as the project lead in partnership with Battelle for Kids and our association. The project sought to accomplish four key tasks:

1. Ensure technical assistance from ODE to the field was substantive, high-quality, and responsive;
2. Enhance communication channels for ODE to hear voices from educators;
3. Share guidelines, best practices, and success stories with educators for making measurable impact on student learning, achievement, and progress; and
4. Support delivery of prioritized, substantive, high-quality professional learning for targeted audiences.

Paolo skillfully led this effort capitalizing on his managerial and strategic planning expertise as well as his content knowledge in the areas of college and career readiness, K-12 education reform, competency-based learning, early literacy, standards and assessments, and public finance. This project was successfully completed on time, under budget, and leveraged the expertise of educational service centers, state support teams, Battelle for Kids, the Ohio Department of Education and private partners to ensure successful implementation.

This experience working with Paolo revealed the following:

- Paolo has knowledge of emerging research and best practices in key policy and funding priority areas for the state of Ohio.
- As a former state budget director and government executive Paolo has successful experience in sound management policies and practices, including inviting appropriate participation of others in planning and decision-making.

8050 North High Street, Suite 150  
Columbus, OH 43235

**P** (614) 846-3855 **F** (614) 846-4081

**E** [info@oesca.org](mailto:info@oesca.org) **W** [oesca.org](http://oesca.org)

INNOVATE. EDUCATE. ADVOCATE.

- Paolo is a consensus builder driven by research and sound policy decisions that are in the interests of students, teachers and the public; skills that will enable him to work cooperatively with the diverse membership of the State Board of Education.
- He is able to work with legislators, staff and other key policy makers on important funding and policy issues and, as such, is poised to lead ODE through the policy development, legislative, and rulemaking processes.
- Paolo makes those around him better and is able to delegate authority appropriately while maintaining accountability and enhancing the performance of his colleagues.

Through all of his professional experiences, Paolo has displayed a well-developed ability to work with diverse interests and multiple stakeholders and constituencies to help bring closure to important – and sometimes contentious – policy decisions. And, he has the ability to lead and make sound judgements in a decisive manner.

Paolo's knowledge and expertise, coupled with his reasonable and rational approach, has established a strong reputation of respect with educators in the field. He is widely respected by the field for his knowledge of public budgeting, school finance and education policy. Equally important he is known to be a trusted partner for his collaborative style.

Paolo DeMaria understands and recognizes that quality education is the cornerstone of democracy and a pathway to prosperity. And, he believes strongly in providing opportunities for all students in all zip codes regardless of where they live and attend school. He recognizes that education is the key to growing and sustaining the economic vitality of the seventh largest state in the nation.

In short, Paolo DeMaria would be an excellent candidate that could bring coherence, collaboration and civility back to education policy discussions in Ohio in a way that few others can. Not only will state-level education stakeholders benefit from his leadership but so will the students of Ohio.

Therefore, as you select new executive leadership for the Ohio Department of Education, it is a pleasure for me to highly recommend, without qualification, Paolo DeMaria for your positive consideration as the next State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Should you have any questions, or if there is any other information which you believe that I may be able to supply, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Craig E. Burford  
Executive Director



8050 North High Street, Suite 170 |  
Columbus, Ohio 43235-6485

Direct: 614.431.9116 | Toll Free (OH only): 800.646.2726 | Fax: 614.431.9137  
www.oasbo-ohio.org | www.facebook.com/oasbo | twitter: @oasbo

April 7, 2016

Dr. Mary Fasbender  
Regional Search Director  
Ray and Associates

Dear Dr. Fasbender,

I am honored to recommend Paolo DeMaria for the position of Ohio State Superintendent. Paolo and I have worked together throughout our careers in our various positions. Paolo is one of the most thoughtful persons I know. He approaches issues deliberately making sure that all views are appropriately considered and all consequences thoroughly reviewed. Paolo has always made sure that affected stakeholders are heard and made to feel part of the decision making process. This should not be interpreted that Paolo is unafraid of making tough decisions, it means that he assures all issues are reviewed before a decision is made.

I first met Paolo when I was at the Ohio Department of Education and he worked as Governor Taft's Chief Policy Advisor/Director of Cabinet Affairs. After we worked together on some issues it was clear to me that public education in Ohio was very important to Paolo. His collaborative approach to the issues we worked on together was impressive and I always felt children came first in his decision making. Paolo also exhibited the savvy needed to navigate the political environment we face in public education particularly at the state policy making level.

When Paolo assumed his role at the Ohio Department of Education, I once again got to work with him when I assumed my role at Ohio ASBO. Our members always enjoyed working with Paolo and appreciated his honesty, integrity and good humor. Paolo worked with OASBO on many issues and I can honestly say because of the skills already mentioned the admiration and respect for him from our members was high even when the decisions made were not always what we wanted to hear. His sense of humor which I think is important in surviving positions like State Superintendent were most on display when he took the time to honor our presidents at the annual luncheon we hold in their honor. He was often considered the best part!

I whole heartedly endorse Paolo's candidacy for Ohio State Superintendent. I am sure that Ohio's children would benefit from his hard working and ethical approach to the



8050 North High Street, Suite 170 |

Columbus, Ohio 43235-6485

Direct: 614.431.9116 | Toll Free (OH only): 800.646.2726 | Fax: 614.431.9137

[www.oasbo-ohio.org](http://www.oasbo-ohio.org) | [www.facebook.com/oasbo](https://www.facebook.com/oasbo) | twitter: @oasbo

problems we face. If you have any questions, feel free to contact at your convenient at my office numbers listed in the letterhead or my cell which is 614-579-6900.

Sincerely,

David A. Varda

Executive Director

Ohio Association of School Business Officials

Tom Gunlock, President  
State Board of Education  
State of Ohio

April 4, 2016

Dear President Gunlock:

I am writing to recommend Paolo DeMaria for appointment to the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Ohio.

I worked closely with Paolo for 5 years when I was Governor and he served as my Chief Policy Advisor and Director of Cabinet Affairs. He supervised our policy staff and was my chief advisor on education policy issues.

Paolo was our lead advisor and liaison with the Governor's Commission on Student Success and the Governor's Commission on Teaching Success. In that capacity he worked closely and skillfully with a diverse group of state educational leaders, including school administrators, teachers, higher education and business leaders and legislators. He managed the process that led to a number of significant recommendations for reform that were adopted by the Ohio General Assembly and the State Board of Education.

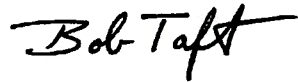
Prior to joining us, Paolo had extensive experience in the field of state budgeting as a result of his service in the Office of Budget and Management. Therefore, he was intimately involved in developing our biennial budget recommendations in the areas of school funding and higher education funding. In response to the DeRolph decisions of the Ohio Supreme Court, and with Paolo's leadership, we developed major school funding operating and rebuilding reforms which were adopted by the Legislature. The success of these initiatives would not have been possible without Paolo's knowledge of state education and fiscal policy.

Paolo is exceptionally knowledgeable about all aspects of K-12 school policy because of his work with OBM, with the Governor's office and in the Ohio Department of Education. He is also up to date on education policy trends in other states due to his current role with Education First Consulting.

He has a collaborative and positive attitude which enables him to work well with colleagues and stakeholders. In addition, he is thoughtful in his approach to policy and considers all aspects of a problem before making a decision. I felt Paolo was forthright and candid in his advice at all times. He was not afraid to present a view that might be unpopular if he felt it was the right thing to do.

For all these reasons, I believe Paolo would do a great job as Ohio's state school Superintendent. Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions about these observations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Taft". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Taft, Distinguished Research Associate, UD: Governor of Ohio 1999-2007  
[rtaft1@udayton.edu](mailto:rtaft1@udayton.edu); 937-229-4012