



Bio

Dr. Michelle Kavanaugh President and Founder, WNY

Dr. Michelle Kavanaugh retired in 2013 after 37 years in education, the last 11 as Superintendent of Schools. During her educational service, she also served as an adjunct faculty for SUNY Oswego and SUNY Buffalo State in Graduate Education, as a committee member for NYSED, as a board member for several nonprofits, as a consultant to SUNY STRIVE via the Greater Rochester Quality Council (Greater Rochester Business Council Affiliate) and as an independent consultant. Upon retirement, she founded and continues to lead the WNY STEM Hub, an education nonprofit.

WNY STEM Hub is a 501c3 nonprofit that activates collaboration among more than 800 cross-sector individuals and 300 organizations across five counties by providing a portfolio of services and youth programs. WNY STEM Hub has been recognized as one of 56 STEM Ecosystems by the National STEM Funders Network as one of 42 authorized Regional Partners of the international Code.org organization.

During her leadership of school systems, Michelle focused on school-business collaboration and results-oriented initiatives. She launched pre-engineering and robotics programs, initiated an Early College/Career Tech Education Program in the North Country and established a Health Certificate Career Pathway Program with Genesee Community College. Her schools garnered distinctions, including: NYSED School to Watch, NYS Whole Child Award, National Center for Educational Achievement High Performing School, U.S. News Gold Medal School, College Board award for Best U.S. STEM High School. Her volunteer work focused on quality systems improvement and STEM: she served on the Core Team to establish the Finger Lakes STEM Hub and the Leadership Team of the Empire State STEM Learning Network. She led the Education initiative of the Greater Rochester Quality Council.

In her leadership roles, Dr. Kavanaugh regularly practices systemic principles for performance excellence. Beyond her work with the Greater Rochester Quality Council, she partnered with the American Productivity and Quality Center and as a judge for quality programs of the American Society for Quality (ASQ). She led a process improvement team to receive the highest category of recognition at the National Quality Education Conference. Her school system was recognized by the Center for American Progress for excellence in efficiency and return on investment. She has served as an education judge for ASQ competitions and on the Board of Examiners for NIST's prestigious Baldrige Award. Her private consultation includes services on performance excellence, strategic planning and executive leadership.

Michelle received an Outstanding STEM Service Award and the Margaret Ashida STEM Leadership Award. She has also received the Service to Science Award from STANYS of WNY, the Women Touching the World Award and the Imagine Greater Buffalo Leadership Award.