

Dr. Kim Morrison, Board Chair
Dr. Sharon L. Contreras, CEO

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Contact Us

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Dear Friends,

"It is a great day to be an educator." I've said it more times than I can count. My signature phrase has been printed on t-shirts and plastered across big screens. I've said it in passing to colleagues and I've declared it with passion to auditoriums filled with employees, educators, conference participants, students and community members. I've said it quietly to myself in the darkest of moments.

I say it during good times, and have even said it when my resolve was shaken. To celebrate, to lift up, to challenge, to re-inspire.

On the days when we feel a sense of hope and accomplishment, it is easy to believe and to declare. But I also know deep in my soul that on days when we feel tired—and motivation is hard to find—that it is especially great to be an educator. You cannot focus your heart and mind on children for long without tapping into a deep and abiding sense of hope. Hope begets possibility. And possibility? Possibility is where the magic begins. Possibility is the fuel for the fire of innovation.

Our work together, our mission, the center of our name is innovation. And it is a word, a concept, an approach I have been thinking intensely about as I prepared to step into this role. It has become a buzz word, used – overused even – across our culture in so many different contexts. Because of that, I look forward to working with you all to explore what Innovation means for us in our daily work. As I have been reflecting on it, I keep landing back on that notion of possibility. On the power of possibility. The possibility of transforming the lives of the children we serve. The possibility of transforming communities throughout North Carolina through powerful, public education.

Management consultants, motivational speakers, economists and the like have much to say about probability and possibility. A McKinsey Quarterly article from several years ago challenges managers to "move beyond managing the probable to leading the possible."

I like the notion of that. I also want us together to think more deeply about what that actually requires of us.



As James Baldwin wrote:

"I speak of change not on the surface but in the depths--change in the sense of renewal. But renewal becomes impossible if one supposes things to be constant that are not--safety, for example, or money, or power. One clings then to chimeras, by which one can only be betrayed, and the entire hope--the entire possibility of freedom disappears."

And so, to innovate, to lead the possible, we will have to change. Change must become our constant. What I know is that we can ride waves of change like young, lithe surfers. And we must, because it is what we are asking of children as we prepare them for their future.

I am ready for the work we can do together. I am grateful for your commitment and your passion. I look forward to supporting you and together finding new ways to harness the fuel of possibility.

With Enduring Hope,

Sharon L Contreras

Sharon L. Contreras, PhD, CEO
The Innovation Project