

SONYA HEMMEN, Ed.D.

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Enacting change management, fostering community partnerships, and driving program excellence to enhance organizational development and mentor future leaders.

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Results-driven, transformational leader with deep experience in educational leadership, program administration, and organizational change. Expert in driving improvements, building inclusive environments, and championing people development. Recognized for strategic vision, decisive leadership, and a proven track record in fostering strong community engagement. Passionate about creating supportive, growth-oriented environments rooted in excellence.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Innovative Teaching
- Reflective Practice
- Leadership Mentoring
- Budget Development & Oversight
- Fundraising & Development
- Change Management
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Montessori Philosophy
- Educational Policy & Regulation
- Bilingual Communication

CAREER HISTORY

COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY | GRAND JUNCTION, CO

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP COORDINATOR & INSTRUCTOR (UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE LEVELS)

2025 – CURRENT

Teaching EDUC115, EDUC215, EDUC311, EDUC461, and graduate-level school leadership courses, pursuing an alternative tenure, coordination of the graduate Educational Leadership (EDLD) program, content creator for department social media, Committees: Interdisciplinary Professional Education (IPE), and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

ROSS MONTESSORI SCHOOL | CARBONDALE, CO

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & HEAD OF SCHOOL (PRESCHOOL-8TH GRADE)

2011 – 2025

Held the strategic leadership role to drive the comprehensive transformation, focusing on operational wellness, strategic planning, and community engagement to drive institutional success and sustainability.

- **Restored the school from the threat of closure through strategic planning, organizational development, and operational management.**
 - Spearheaded financial turnaround by establishing payment plans to settle outstanding and ongoing bills for operational expenses, managing a \$4M budget, and ensuring economic stability.
 - Executed an operational overhaul to open a new school, managing the planning, funding, and construction phases, resulting in the fully operational status of the new school facility; added a large center preschool.
- **Orchestrated organizational development initiatives to support long-term growth and sustainability.**
 - Led strategic planning to expand the local Montessori school community by opening a new preschool, managing each operational step throughout the auditing and approval processes.
 - Established four stakeholder committees with teachers, staff, and community members, focused on community engagement, funding, staff experience, and seasonal learning programs.
 - Launched a scholarship program enabling students to attend summer enrichment and tutoring programs.
 - Created and steered a policy review committee to ensure compliance with state, federal, and school-specific regulations, collaborating with attorneys to write, update, and uphold all school policies.
- **Liaised between the school and the broader community, fostering strong relationships with local organizations and stakeholders.**
 - Engaged with the local community through targeted public relations efforts and parent education programs, enhancing the school's reputation and community support.
- **Directed development plans to meet budgetary needs through community fundraising efforts.**
 - Led the school community's annual fund campaign, raising \$60-140K annually to supplement budget requirements and align with the budgetary standards of local public schools.
 - Coordinated classroom teams designed to foster an engaged parent community anchored in giving and support to eliminate a 20% funding gap year-over-year.

- **Developed and implemented comprehensive staff development programs to improve educational outcomes and increase teacher retention rates.**
 - Mentored and supported 40 staff members to oversee performance, enhance their professional growth, and align practices with Montessori educational principles.

MONTESSORI EDUCATION CENTER OF THE ROCKIES | DENVER, CO

2017-2018

ADJUNCT TEACHER (FOR LEADERSHIP CREDENTIALING)

Taught hybrid School Operations course to aspiring school leaders, including creation of positive school climate and culture, budgeting, human resources, parent relations development, professional development, and school safety.

ROARING FORK SCHOOL DISTRICT | GLENWOOD SPRINGS, CO

PRINCIPAL, GLENWOOD SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PRESCHOOL-5TH GRADE)

2003– 2011

Led as principal in a challenging school environment, managing budgets, piloting new curricula, and providing comprehensive support to students and their families with high supplemental education services.

- Addressed significant student attendance issues by initiating a home visit program, building trust with parents, engaging them as critical school community stakeholders, and providing wrap-around support services.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, GLENWOOD SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL

2000– 2003

Contributed to the administrative leadership team, overseeing student discipline, supervising athletics and student activities, and evaluating 40+ staff educators.

- Grew as an emerging educational leader through ownership of the 9th-grade orientation program, staff development initiatives, and student drop-out prevention efforts.

COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE | GLENWOOD SPRINGS, CO

ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR (100-200 LEVEL COURSES)

1996– 1998

Fostered a supportive learning environment for adult learners.

- Taught 100 and 200-level Spanish, GED, and ELD courses.

EDUCATION AND DEGREES

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT UNIVERSITY | DENVER, CO

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Charter School Management

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO | GREELEY, CO

Master of Arts, Educational Leadership

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY | TEMPE, AZ

Post Baccalaureate Program, Secondary Spanish Instruction

Bachelor of Arts, Spanish Literature & Latin American Studies

LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION K-12 Professional Principal, Teacher, and Administrator (Superintendent)

AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY Montessori Administrator

PUBLICATIONS

Hemmen, S. (Summer 2025). Lesson Study: A Tool to Improve Montessori Teaching and Learning.

Montessori Life, 35-41

Hemmen, S. (2023). The Effect of the NCMPs Lesson Study on Student Learning and Achievement.

[Doctoral Dissertation], William Howard Taft University.

Hemmen, S., Marks, R., and Brown, K. (Fall 2025). Research Backs the Montessori 3-Year Cycle.

Montessori Public, 8(1), 1-3.

Hemmen, S., Hybrid Learning in a Rural Setting. (Fall 2020). *Montessori Public*, 5(1).