



Dr. Donna C. Hanlin

Dr. Donna Hanlin is an educator with a broad background of teaching and leadership experiences that span pre-kindergarten to higher education and a strong passion for improving the lives of children. She was born and raised in Salisbury, Maryland and is a James M. Bennett High School graduate.

Dr. Hanlin began her career as a classroom teacher in Wicomico County Public Schools. She assisted in the design of the elementary guidance program for the school system and served as an elementary and middle school counselor. She served as Assistant Principal at Wicomico Middle and James M. Bennett High schools and as Principal of James M. Bennett High School before being promoted to Director of Secondary Education for the school system.

After 26 years in Wicomico County Public Schools, Dr. Hanlin moved to Hagerstown, Maryland. In Washington County Public Schools, she served as Supervisor of Special Education, Director of Elementary Education, Assistant Superintendent and finally Associate Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, having been promoted to positions with progressively-increasing responsibility. Dr. Hanlin has taught master's and doctorate level courses for Frostburg State University on instructional design, assessment and accountability, and the change process. She served as consultant in the design of the STEMM Technical Middle College, a partnership between the Washington County Public Schools and Hagerstown Community College, providing early college opportunities for high school students. She currently serves as Co-Chair and Director of Assessment and Accountability for the Department of Education at Shepherd University.

Known for her collaborative leadership style, Dr. Hanlin has a proven track record of reducing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates, improving school climate, and implementing instructional practices that are based upon research-based principles of learning. She has a deep understanding of systems thinking and has implemented processes that align school system, school, and classroom level processes for the continuous improvement of student learning. As a leader in education, Dr. Hanlin was appointed by the Governor to the Maryland Educator Effectiveness Council, by the State Superintendent to the Maryland Instructional Technology Advisory Council, and by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners to the School Building and Design Advisory Committee.

During her tenure in senior leadership positions, Dr. Hanlin has focused on developing challenging, innovative and personalized educational opportunities to serve the needs of a diverse student population. She is a passionate advocate for high expectations and opportunities for all students that will prepare them well for college and careers. She believes that the development of the whole child begins with a strong foundation in early childhood and continues when students learn to think critically, work together to solve problems, and explore interests. She believes in the strength of teachers and principals, the importance of risk-taking and empowerment, and the authentic involvement of the community, with parents as partners, to improve schools for the benefit of all students.

Having started her own education at the Salisbury Teachers College, Campus Elementary School, and being strongly influenced by that lab school environment for teacher education, Dr. Hanlin knew from a very early age that she wanted to be a teacher. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Purdue University, a master's degree in education from Salisbury University, and a doctorate in education leadership from the University of Maryland, College Park. Her doctoral dissertation work on emotional intelligence strongly influences her day-to-day leadership practices.

Active engagement in the community is a priority for Dr. Hanlin. She is the President of the Board of Directors of Girls' Incorporated, Washington County and is a member of the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts Foundation Board and the Rotary Early Childhood Literacy Task Force. She and her husband, David, have four children, Michael, Cameron, Jessica, and Ellery.