Cincinnati, OH • (513) 207-2566 schoolwitness.com • [vrhodes2020@gmail.com](mailto:vrhodes2020@gmail.com)

**Virginia L. Rhodes, Ed.D.**

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**CV/Expert Qualifications**

Highly experienced and knowledgeable expert witness in school-related cases with over 35 years of dedicated service in K-12 education field. Equipped with deep understanding of educational systems, policies, and regulations, offering invaluable insight into critical school and district strategy, leadership and decision-making. Adept in legal proceedings, and a trusted authority in the educational field, offering expert opinions on matters ranging from standard and duty of care to educational policy matters.

Track record of successful courtroom appearances, contributing to favorable outcomes in school-related legal disputes. Known for providing expert, articulate, and compelling testimony. Adept at analyzing complex educational issues and delivering timely expert reports that stand up to rigorous scrutiny.

# Core Competencies

* Education Policy Analysis
* Expert Witness Testimony
* Educational Leadership
* School Governance
* School Culture Development
* School Personnel Development

# Key Contributions

* Organizational Transformation
* Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
* Educational Evaluation
  + Guided international firm in strategizing entry into new market sector by providing expert advice on specific aspects of U.S. public school practices, resulting in successful market exploration.
  + Partnered with University of Cincinnati to evaluate field-based training course for high school science teachers.
  + Led the transformation of a large urban high-poverty high school into the largest STEM school in the U.S., introducing teacher-led governance, experiential learning, and team-task teacher hiring.
  + Contributed as consultant at University of Cincinnati Career Center, supporting pre-service teachers with mock interviews and equipping postgraduates in STEM fields for successful interviews within industry.

# Education

**Ed.D. / Urban Educational Leadership, 2008**, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH

## Administrator Development Academy

**M.A.T. /Social Studies, 1983**, University, Bloomington, IN

**B.A. /Political Science, 1975**, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH

**Additional Courses at Xavier University**, Cincinnati, OH

# Professional Experience

**Expert Witness Services in School & Education-Related Court Cases through School Witness,**

**a division of Renegade Learning LLC Consulting Services**

With cases in 20 U. S. states, Dr. Rhodes works with both plaintiff and defense attorneys, leveraging specialized knowledge and extensive experience to provide invaluable insights in liability and domestic cases, including safety, equity, supervision, duty and standard of care, discrimination, physical and sexual abuse, education policy, school evaluation and other matters, assisting the court towards resolution.

## K-12 School Teacher, Administrator & Policymaker, Cincinnati, OH 1977-2012 Set and uphold high standards of care for K-12 students and school personnel, ensuring secure and nurturing educational atmosphere and duty with distinction. Designed structural solutions for high-risk settings, including excess mobility, poverty,

victimization, and trauma to maintain educational resilience in challenging environments.

* Played pivotal role in enhancing school safety and discipline through expert guidance on violence prevention, accident management, and emergency planning, resulting in safer learning environments.
* Delivered conference training sessions focused on sound practices and best practices, equipping educational leaders with tools needed for effective decision making and strategic planning.
* Conducted comprehensive school culture assessments and led collective designs of optimal learning climates to enhance overall educational experience and academic effectiveness for students and staff.
* Implemented social emotional learning (SEL) strategies, fostering greater self-regulation, bonding and well-being among students and staff to establish cultures of safety.
* Elevated student engagement through outdoor adventures and intersession programs, promoting active learning and enrichment.
* Nurtured growth of STEM, environmental, magnet, and other specialty startups within K-12 education sector.
* Provided effective supervision and training for paraprofessionals and non-certificated employees, assuring skilled and proficient workforce.
* Spearheaded adoption of innovative and 21st-century practices both domestically and internationally to keep education systems at forefront of modern pedagogy and global standards.
* Pioneered innovative approaches to discipline systems in urban schools to emphasize acceptance-based methods over rejection-based systems and to promote more inclusive and positive outcomes.

**Hughes STEM High School & Hughes Center, Cincinnati, OH Principal/AP**

**1994 to 2012**

Guided educational institutions through leadership roles as Principal at Western Hills Design Technology High School and Aiken University High School while also serving as Assistant Principal at Walnut Hills High School, Hughes Center High School, and Taft High School. Established and spearheaded inaugural phase of largest public, open-enrollment STEM high school in United States. Demonstrated expertise in organizational effectiveness, secondary education, problem solving, and recruiting. Utilized data analysis to drive informed decision making and implemented effective communication strategies. Applied strong analytical skills in program management to ensure institution's continued growth and excellence.

* Recognized by U.S. Dept. of Education as the only Principal Investigator on key research/design project of largest teacher-led school in nation, to also serve as the administrative Principal.
* Oversaw innovative an experiential high school, design for educational needs of over 1K high-poverty students in grades 7-12 in Cincinnati, adding a Gr. 7-8 junior high "pipeline" to decrease excess mobility.
* Transformed additional failing high school from one with worst science scores in Ohio to Ohio's first public Environmental high school, increasing science achievement from 8% to 53% in 2 years.
* Provided visionary organizational leadership and instigated transformative culture change within institution.
* Managed human resources functions and fostered organizational learning, emphasizing teamwork and change management.

**Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, OH**

**Administrator / Member, Board of Education / Classroom Teacher**

**1976 to 1993**

Led educational institutions in various capacities, including Principal/AP roles at Western Hills Design Technology High School, Aiken University/Environmental High School, and Academy of World Languages, along with Assistant Principal positions at Walnut Hills High School, Woodward High School, Hughes Center

High School, and Robert A. Taft High School. Facilitated engaging and effective classroom instruction to create dynamic learning atmosphere. Collaborated with colleagues and educational stakeholders to improve curriculum standards, instructional methods, and student outcomes. Advocated for educational equity and needs of students, parents, and teachers during board meetings and community engagements.

* Contributed as valued member of Board of Education, actively participating in decision making processes to define district's policies, budgets, and educational initiatives.
  + Chaired Facilities Committee and served also on Program and Personnel.
  + Policy initiatives included ending smoking and corporal punishment, and reducing excessive mobility via improvement in bus transportation policy.
* Executed administrative functions, including overseeing school operations and full renovation of an historic building servicing 2200 students, managing faculty and support staff, interfacing with parents, neighborhood leaders, universities, city leadership while innovating educational programs to ensure optimal learning.
* Demonstrated leadership and commitment to betterment of Cincinnati's educational system.

# Professional Leadership

* AdvanceEd Team Evaluator for school accreditation, St. Bernard/Elmwood Place High School. Jan. 2014, Ponitz Career Center High School May 2013, Dayton, OH. Western Hills Univ. High School, Cinti., Jan. 2013
* Stupski Foundation National Convening, San Francisco, Oct. 22-25, 2012, brought group of secondary faculty & students for cooperative training in student-led schooling.
* STEM Training Professional Development, Hughes STEM faculty, June 1-5 2012.
* “Innovative Urban School Structures,” Panelist at Leadership Cincinnati’s Education Day, March 8, 2012, Hughes STEM High School’s Innovation Lab.
* Stupski Learning Lab National Conference, action research on school climate and student voice, Danville, KY, Feb. 2012.
* E-Tech Ohio Conference, Columbus, OH. 2/12. Whole-school strategy to reduce digital divide.
* Principal Investigator, NSF-funded I-TEST CincySTEM program evaluation, 2009-2012.
* Ohio Dept. of Education Annual Statewide Conference: RTT participant, 10/2013
* Innovation presentation at Ohio STEM Learning Network Race-to-Top Conf. Columbus, 3/11
* Hiring for Collaboration; STEM Teacher Selection, presentation/workshop at the Southwest Ohio STEM HUB Fusion Center Conference, University of Cincinnati, Sept.15, 2010.
* Roundtable presentation, National Science and Math Teacher Imperative, June 2010, sponsored by 127 Universities of the Assoc. of Public/Land Grant Universities: Cincinnati, Ohio.
* Ohio Summit on 21st Century Skills, CPS Supt’s representative, Columbus, Ohio, May 4, 2010
* “Generating & Analyzing Data Through Collaboration,” 21st Century Teaching & Learning Conference: Building a Regional Vision, High Aims Consortium, April 29, 2010, with James Stallworth & Tiffany Stanton. Exploration of electronic student response systems.
* Panelist: “Opening a New STEM High School” along with UC and Strive partners; Governor’s Southwest Ohio Regional STEM Conference, Cincinnati, April 2010.
* Faculty Writing Group/Data Acquisition: & Aggregation Group, STEM High School Faculty in collaboration with UC Faculty, Oct. 2010, founder & co-facilitator.
* Cincinnati City Schools appointed representative on Mayor’s Green Initiatives Comm., 2010
* OSLN STEM/Battelle Target Conf. Feb. 6, 2009, COSI, Columbus, Ohio
* Math/Science Teacher Summit, Nov. 8, 2008, Cincinnati, Ohio
* Trained in Team Building & Group Process by GDP Assoc./2004.
* Pioneered the team-taught Humanities & Junior Research block courses at Woodward, recognized by Ohio Governor Voinovich in December 1993.
* "Dynamics & Scope of School Board Leadership," Keynote. Issues in Education Symposium. Cleveland Marshall College of Law, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH, Oct. 1989
* “From Classroom to Boardroom” Federation Teacher, 1986-88
* Rhodes Reports local educational issues newsletter, Cincinnati, OH 1986-91
* “Mainstreaming in the Social Studies” Co-author, curriculum guide, 1981
* “Teaching the Federal Election Process” News and Notes/Social Sciences, ’77
* Mock Interviewer for prospective teacher candidates, UC Career Development Center
* Member, High School Task Force, Curriculum & Instruction Dept., CPS
* Decentralized student data access at Hughes, training and enabling teacher teams to use data analysis to support improved instructional practices.
* Designed & supervised new Intervention Team at Woodward, supporting high-risk students.
* Ohio STEM Learning Network (OSLN)
* American Educational Research Association (AERA)
* Comparative & International Education Society (CIES/WCCES)
* National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
* Ohio Association of Secondary School Principals (OASSP)
* University Council of Educational Administrators (UCEA)
* National Council for Social Studies (NCSS)
* Stupski Foundation (Grant Recipient)
* University of Chicago CincySTEM School Evaluation Team
* National Science Foundation (NSF) STEM Grant Recipient & Principal Investigator
* Cincinnati Association of Administrators & Supervisors (CAAS)
* Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (OFT, AFT)
* Philosophy of Education Society (PES)
* John Dewey Society (JDS)

# Research, Writing & Conference Leadership

* Review of "Stimulating Mechanistic Reasoning in Physics Using Student-Constructed Stop-Motion Animations" (Journal of Science Education, 2020) Reviewed in ResearchGate.
* “Districts Innovate, Too,” Inside Our Schools (chapter): Teachers on the Failure and Future of School Reform, Harvard University Education Publishing, May 2017. Brett Murphy, editor.
* "Building School Unity Through Diversity," Bowles Diversity Conference, March 2018 at Northern Kentucky P University, 2016, '17 & '18.
* Dialogue on Race in America," Ohio Diversity & Leadership Conf. Columbus OH, Sept. 2014
* “STEM FOR ALL,” presentation at 26th annual At-Risk Youth National Forum, by Clemson University’s National Drop-Out Prevention Center. Myrtle Beach, SC, Feb. 16-19, 2014
* "Innovative Hiring Approach for STEM,” T-STEM Conference, Dallas, TX, Feb. 6-8, 2014.
* N.E.W. Conference, Ft. Wayne, IN, Nov. 6, 2012. Led training workshop for faculty in planning and implementation of STEM high schools.
* Urban Institute Conference, led training session for Woodrow Wilson Fellows on urban high school culture-building, University of Akron, OH: June 20, 2012.
* National Science Foundation, I-TEST Summit, Participant in constructing STEM models, Principal Investigator on NSF I-TEST STEM study; Washington, DC, Feb. 2012. Honored as only practicing school principal & PI.
* "Building Culture in an Urban STEM High School," presentation at AERA annual convention, April 2011, New Orleans, LA with co-authors Annette Hemmings, PhD and Doug Stevens, Ed.D.
* “The Digital Divide,” Presentation, N. Ky. Univ., Bowles Diversity Ctr., Nov. 2011.
* Creating Culture in an Urban STEM High School” High School Journal, Fall 2011.

AERA Annual Convention; presentation of research on start-up of urban STEM high school, New Orleans, April 11, 2011 with Annette Hemmings & Doug Stevens.

* P.I., National Science Foundation I-TEST conference 3/11, Washington, DC; CincySTEM I-TEST research project.
* “Building an Urban STEM High School,” NextGen. Learn. Conf., Columbus. School Culture
* “Using STEM & Green Strategies with Urban Youth” June 2010, presentation, World Congress of WCCES, Bogazici University June 15, 2010, Istanbul, Turkey
* “Hiring for Collaboration: The Team Task Interviews” w/ Sharon Bachman, presentation at NWO conference, Perrysburg, Ohio, Nov. 6, 2010.
* Association for Practical & Professional Ethics, Annual Meeting Panelist “Ethical Considerations for K- 12 Expulsions” (Robert Ladenson) March 2010, Cincinnati, OH.
* National Science Foundation (NSF) Conference, Feb. 25, 2010, Washington, D.C. Principal Investigator, CincySTEM Urban Initiative. Grant Awardee.
* Ohio STEM Summit Conference, March 2, 2010, COSI, Columbus, Ohio
* OSLN STEM Principals Conference, Feb. 2010, Bucyrus, Ohio
* Presentation at NWO Symposium (Northwest Ohio Center for Excellence in Science & Math Teaching Science), Nov. 6, 2010, Penta Career Center, Perrysburg, Ohio.
* Southwest Ohio STEM Summit, University of Cincinnati, Sept. 2009
* Digital Directions: Smart Ed-Tech Strategies for Tough Times, Chicago, Ed Week. 9/09
* Keynote Speaker, “The Revolving Door of Student Mobility,” Student Mobility Summit, Parent Education Committee of LaGrange Village Council, Toledo, Ohio, Feb. 22, 2008
* Student Mobility Workshop, 2/08 Nat. At-Risk Youth Conf./NDPC, Myrtle Beach, SC
* Presentation, Mending the Rift Between Administration and Teachers in Inner-City Schools, Feb. 19, 2008, National At-Risk Youth Conference.
* “Kids In The Creek,” Aiken University High School, case study in environmental start-up, Oct. 2008, Cincinnati.
* “Learning On The Go: Voices of Highly Mobile Urban Students” Learning Inquiry, Vol. 2, no.2, May 2008. (Review reference in London Digest, Fall 2008 issue)
* “The 42% Solution: Reducing Student Mobility” TX Elementary Principal/Supervisory. Assoc., 3/08 V. 21, no. 2
* “Effects of School Mobility on Homeless Children” 2006-07. Consultant.
* “Student Mobility: The Elephant in NCLB’s Living Room,” Vol. 25, No. 1 Winter 2007, ERS Spectrum/Journal of Research & Information.
* Student Mobility Briefing for Community Education Organizers, Oct. ‘07, Columbus.
* “Impact of Urban School Mobility on Ohio School Ratings” Urban Education Journal Perspectives on Education, U. of Penn. (predictive discriminant functional analysis), Oct. 2006.
* S2tudent Mobility Bibliography, MobiKid Info, a European site on student mobility issues 2006.
* “Kids on the Move: School Mobility and NCLB”, North Central School Accreditation and School Improvement Newsletter; March 2006, Vol. 4 Issue 4.
* Roundtable convenor., Student Mobility, Am. Ed. Research Assoc. Convention, San Fran., Ca. 4/06
* Workshop, April 4, 2006, Student Mobility, North Central Assoc. Forum, Chicago, IL.
* Threat & Vulnerability Assessment Training/Mayerson Academy for HR Development, Jan. 2006
* “Using de facto Learning Theory to Understand School Mobility” Academic Exchange Extra, Oct. 2005, Presented at Columbia University, 2005.
* Paper presentation, Dec. 4, 2005, Student Mobility & NCLB and Race & Education Session
* Chair, International Conf. for Social Science Research, Orlando, Fla. Paper session, 4/16/05.
* Student Mobility and the Loss of Community. Urban Affairs Association, Salt Lake City, Utah.
* Session presentation, April 1, 2005, de facto Learning Theory, Philosophy of Education Society Graduate Student Conference at Columbia University, New York City.
* Roundtable presentation, March 2005, Student Mobility, Anonymity, & Loss of Community. Miami/Oxford, OH
* Paper presentation, Feb. 11, 2005, Student Mobility, Parent Decision-Making, & NCLB, Parent Education Conference, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas.
* Research presentation, Oct. 2004, Student Mobility & NCLB, Migrant Ed. Conf., S. Padre Island, Texas.
* Research presentation, Spring 2001, Student Mobility, Lexington Spring Research conference. U. of Kentucky.
* School Mobility and Behavioral Health study, consultant to Children’s Hospital Medical Center Research Center, Dr. Mona Mansour, principal investigator
* “School Security: Real Safeguards, or Mechanical Shortcuts?” Cinti Post, 1/93
* “Representation & Neighborhood Power: District Elections” Cinti Herald, 2/93
* “Student Mobility & Achievement” August, 1992“
* "Americans in Russia: How Many Muscovites Does It Take?” 9/91
* “Power, Silence, and Serenity” 2/91
* “Stability & Continuity in Neighborhood Schools” 7/90
* “Panaceas and Public Schooling” Cincinnati Post, 9/89
* “Privatization in Public Schooling” NCEA Conference paper, 6/89
* “Women in Politics” Cincinnati Review, Fall 1986

# Recognitions & Awards

* Southern Poverty Law Center in "recognition of important contribution" for supporting justice Feb. 2024
* Outstanding Contribution & Leadership in the field of "STEM Education/Principal Investigator Emeritus Award" National Science Foundation Feb. 2012
* Environmental Educator of the Year, in Greater Cincinnati Earth Coalition, 2008
* Wright-Overstreet Award for Exemplary Service in Human Rights, 1990
* Outstanding Achievement Award, Cincinnati Women’s Political Caucus, 1989
* M.L. King, Jr. Achievement Award, Taft Alumni Association, 1988
* Named in “200 Bicentennial Leaders,” Cincinnati Enquirer, 1988
* Excellent Staff Attendance Award, Hughes Center, 1997-99
* "Problem Solver of the Year" Award, Taft High School Faculty, 1996
* Awarded study grant by the Indiana U. Religion Studies Institute, 1983
* Outstanding Teaching and Curriculum Development in Economics, 1979

# Community Service

* Co-Convener, UGRR/Abolition Intersession, Hughes STEM March 2014
* Site Coordinator of College Hill Bicentennial Living History, 2013
* College Hill Forum, Education Committee Chairperson, 2012-14 & 2021-23
* Volunteer, development of STEM elements in Crawford Commons in College Hill (Cincinnati)
* “Swing Semester” host for national campaign volunteers, Fall 2008
* Elected member, Cincinnati Board of Education 1985-1993

## Present or past member of community & non-profit organizations

* EmpowerEd Advisory Board member (Washington, DC)
* Greenwood SC Chamber of Commerce
* College Hill Forum Board Member & Education Committee Chair
* Founding member, National Coalition of Education Activists
* ONE HUGHES Foundation Board member
* Cincinnati SEL Board of Directors member
* College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation
* College Hill Business Association
* University of Cincinnati STEM Advisory Board
* Sister City Association of Cincinnati, vice-president
* United Way/Community Chest Planning Division Board
* Cincinnati Women in Jazz Committee
* Warner Cable Board of Directors, CPS Appointee
* Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Board member
* Woman’s City Club
* League of Women Voters
* Cincinnati Women’s Political Caucus
* National Organization for Women
* Friends of Findlay Market
* Roselawn, Walnut Hills, CUF, Clifton Heights & College Hill Community Councils

# Community & Civic Engagement

Dr. Rhodes is active in her neighborhood and broader community, speaking at celebrations of women’s achievements, educational equity, Black History events, graduations, and local university classes. This community-building work has extended throughout Ohio, Kentucky, and Chicago, including Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, Ohio Women’s Lawyers Conference, Planned Parenthood, Bankers Club Executive Women’s Roundtable, local church events, and other forums.

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