

**Cynthia M. Ellwood**  
2850 N. Hackett Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53211  
cynthia.ellwood@marquette.edu

## **EDUCATION**

PhD, Social Sciences of Education  
Stanford University, 1990

MA, History  
Stanford University, 1984

MA, Education  
Stanford University, 1982

BA, Communications  
With Distinction  
Stanford University, 1977

## **EXPERIENCE**

**Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies  
Department of Educational Policy and Leadership (EDPL)  
Marquette University College of Education – July 2013 - present**

### *Program Leadership and Teaching*

- Oversaw the comprehensive redesign of the Educational Leadership Program (EDLD). Currently co-coordinate curriculum, assessment and reporting, recruitment and marketing, community partnership, and budgeting for the program.
- Developed the MU-MPS Preparing Extraordinary Leaders Program in partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools, an important expansion of the EDLD program market and community impact. Since 2017, the overall EDLD annual cohort size has doubled, and the portion of students of color has risen from 0-10% to 45-50%.
- Courses taught: The Principalship, Politics and Community in Educational Organizations, Instructional Leadership, Practicum in the Principalship, and the Masters Capstone: Current Issues in Educational Policy and Leadership

### *Service*

- University Committee on Teaching (2016-2021) – Chair, 2017-18 and 2019-21
- Chair, Teaching Working Group, University Budget deliberations (2020-2021)
- Director of Graduate Studies (EDPL: 2015-2020; EDLD: 2021-present)
- Member of the EDPL Leadership Team (ongoing)
- Service to the community

- Milwaukee Public Schools: appointed member, Hartford University Lab School Concept Committee (2026-ongoing); interview panelist for Academic Superintendent and High School Principal positions (2025); mentor/coach to the District Director of Equity (2016-2018)
- Facilitate Masters Capstone Client Consultation Projects serving 8-10 community organizations annually (2014-present)

### **Regional Executive, Milwaukee Public Schools – June 2010 – June 2013**

- Led 35 schools in the East Region serving 17,500 young people in pre-kindergarten through high school. Developed, supported, supervised, and evaluated the schools' leaders. Appointed principals and assistant principals. Oversaw all aspects of daily operations including teaching and learning, budget, personnel, public affairs, safety, and facilities.
- Responsible for developing a mix of high-quality educational programs in the region to serve students and families. This included developing a new high school; working with the school and community to transform an existing low performing high school into a specialty school for creativity and innovation; and helping to shape district initiatives. The East Region served the broadest socio-economic and ethnic diversity of neighborhoods in the district, and school programs included specialties in the arts, Montessori, community schools, two-way bilingual, STEM, university partnership, teacher-led schools and others.
- Led the design, development and implementation of the district's new Teacher Growth and Evaluation system.
- Co-led district-wide principal professional development.
- Served as a member of the district senior leadership team.

### **Principal, Hartford University School, Milwaukee Public Schools - 1998 - 2010**

Led the transformation of this predominantly African American, high poverty public school serving 675 students in grades kindergarten to grade 8. Previously the school performed below the district average, had a notoriously negative climate, and was the subject of a rare school board resolution threatening central take-over. Hartford University School became one of the most respected, sought-after schools in the district, distinguished by unusual offerings in the arts, strong linkages with the university, and academic performance that consistently exceeded the district, while student demographics remained stable and admission remained non-selective.

### **Director, High Standards Reform, Milwaukee Public Schools – 1997 - 1998**

Led mobilization for Proficiency 2000 and the Milwaukee Urban Systemic Initiative funded by the National Science Foundation.

**Director, Educational Services, Milwaukee Public Schools – 1991 - 1997**

As the district's chief academic officer, articulated the district vision for systemic reform and mobilized people and resources to bring about increased student achievement. Responsible for all system-wide educational initiatives, programs and divisions, with a total budget in excess of \$60 million. Co-Principal Investigator for the \$15 million NSF Urban Systemic Initiative.

**Coordinator, K-12 Teaching and Learning Initiative, MPS – 1990 - 1991**

Led the system-wide kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum and instruction reform.

**Teacher, South Division High School, Milwaukee – 1984 - 1990**

Taught monolingual and bilingual English and social studies and participated in school reform as a teacher leader.

**Teaching Intern, Los Altos-Mountain View High School, Mountain View, CA – 1983-1984 - English and Social Studies.**

**Research Assistant and Teaching Assistant, Stanford University – 1980 – 1984**

Researcher for the Mexican American Education Research Group. Teaching Assistant in Philosophy of Education.

**National Literacy Campaign Staff, Nicaragua Ministry of Education - 1980**

**SELECTED GRANTS**

- Wallace Foundation: Equity-Centered Leadership Pipeline, with the Milwaukee Public Schools (2022- 2023).
- \$50,000 Spencer Foundation Small Research Grant (with Sharon M. Chubbuck), “Toward Dismantling Tracking and Systemic Inequity” (2015). Procured.
- \$15 million for the National Science Foundation Urban Systemic Initiative for district-wide mathematics and science reform. Co-PI. (1996-2000). Procured.
- \$3 million from the Danforth Foundation for the Dorothy Compton Danforth Urban Teacher Fellowship to prepare highly qualified middle school teachers in cooperation with Alverno College and Marquette University (1996-2003). Procured.
- \$600,000 from the Joyce Foundation for the Assessing Learning Project, a collaboration of MPS and Alverno College. (1993-1999) Procured.
- \$500,000 from the Joyce Foundation for the Leadership Academy, in cooperation with the North Central Regional Education Lab. (1993-1997) Procured.

- \$225,000 from the Danforth Foundation -Team Planning for Action (1994-1997). Procured.

## **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- Moderator and Panelist: Focusing K-12 Education Reform on Teaching Efforts, forum presented by the Marquette Law School's Lubar Center for Public Policy Research and Civic Education and the Marquette College of Education, May 2025
- University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Symposium Presentation, "The joy of young people transforming the world," November 2024, Los Angeles.
- Invited Panelist: Equity and Excellence in Education, Marquette University, February 2023
- Wallace Equity-Centered Leadership Collaborative, with the Milwaukee Public Schools and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (January 2022-August 2023)
- American Education Research Association (AERA) Paper Presentation, Sharon Chubbuck & Cynthia Ellwood, "Dismantling systemic racism through detracking: Teachers' stories of promise and contradiction," April 2022, San Diego
- American Education Research Association (AERA) Paper Presentation, Sharon Chubbuck & Cynthia Ellwood, "Fiddling with the flame of disequilibrium: Leveraging conflict to lead structural reform for equity," April 2016, San Antonio
- AERA Paper Presentation, "Understanding we misunderstand: Disrupting cultural narratives in developing school leaders," April 2015, Chicago
- University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Paper Presentation, "Interrogating narratives of race, class, and justice: Community mapping in preparing school leaders," November 2014, Washington, DC
- Other national level invited or juried presentations include:
  - Association of Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
  - American Education Research Association (AERA)
  - Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)
  - Community Fellows of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
  - Danforth Foundation National Principal Initiative
  - National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
  - National Education Writers Association
  - North Dakota Study Group
  - Quality Education for Minorities Network
- Commencement Addresses: Alverno College, 2012; Marquette College of Education, 2013
- Founding Editor of *Rethinking Schools, An Urban Educational Journal*
- Principal Coach, New Leaders for New Schools
- Founding Co-Facilitator of the MPS K-8 Principals' Collaborative
- Principal Assessor for the MPS Principal Assessment Center
- Member of the Technical Work Group for the National Longitudinal Study of Schools: Implementation of Standards Based Reform and Title 1 Supports for Reform, a nation-wide study conducted for the U.S. Department of Education (1997-2000)
- Board Member, Milwaukee Community Service Corps

## SELECTED HONORS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Milwaukee Public Television: Principals Who Make a Difference. One of three principals featured in a public television production. (2010)
- Wallace Fellow. Selected as one of the top performing urban principals in the State of Wisconsin for the first Wallace Fellows Cohort, culminating in Master Principal Certification by the State Department of Public Instruction. (2005-2007)
- Norman N. Gill Award for Individual Excellence in Government Awarded by the Public Policy Forum (1994)
- Stanford University Doctoral Fellowship (1980-84)
- Phi Beta Kappa (1977)

## PUBLICATIONS

Chubbuck, S. M. & Ellwood, C. M. (2026). *Beautiful struggle: How one American high school took on institutional racism*. University of Chicago Press.

Ellwood, C. M. (2024). Mobilizing and organizing for racial justice: A letter to future school leaders. In Pink, William (Ed.), *Innovative school reforms: International perspectives on reimagining theory, policy, and practice for the future*. Springer.

Chubbuck, S. M., & Ellwood, C. M. (2016). Fiddling with the Flame of Disequilibrium: A Study of Distributed Adaptive Leadership and Detracking. *AERA Online Paper Repository*.

Ellwood, C. M. (1995). Preparing teachers for education in a diverse world, in D. Levine, R. Lowe, B. Peterson & R. Tenorio, *Rethinking Schools: An Agenda for Change*. New Press.

Ellwood, C. M. (1993). Can we really look through our students' eyes? An urban teacher's perspective. *The Journal of Educational Foundations*, 7(3), 63.

Ellwood, C. (1989). Making connections: Challenges we face. *Rethinking Schools*, 3(3).

Ellwood, C. M. (1989). Why we need ethnic studies in teacher preparation programs: An urban teacher talks to educators. *Rethinking Schools*, 4(1).

Ellwood, C. M. (1989). The day Sondra took over. *Rethinking schools*, 4(1).