

Leadership & Impact

From direct work with students and families to school administration, districtwide systems, civic service, and original initiatives — a record of where Dr. Ortiz McGrath has led and what the work has made possible.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Schools and districts

District Administrator, PK-12

Chelsea Public Schools · 2022-Present

Leads districtwide strategy across an 11-school PK-12 system serving approximately 6,300 students, aligning academic, attendance, behavioral, SEL/MTSS, family-engagement, and specialized-support priorities. Leads and develops professional teams through PLC structures and data-informed routines, advises central office leaders, principals, and school teams on crisis response and compliance, and directs grants, vendor and community partnerships with families, public agencies, healthcare and crisis providers, and regional organizations.

Principal

Waltham High School · 2021-Aug 2022

First Latina and first woman to lead the school in 53 years. Directed schoolwide instructional strategy, operations, culture, and student-success priorities through an improvement plan centered on academic growth and belonging; led the Instructional Leadership Team in developing the Quality School Plan; supervised and evaluated faculty and school-based teams; and expanded family partnership through the PTO, School Site Council, home visits, adult education, and the Latinx Parent Leadership Group.

Associate Principal

Waltham Public Schools · 2017-2021

The district's first Latina administrator. Led high school house operations, student-success systems, school climate, and discipline, advancing the School Improvement Plan with department leaders. Provided staff supervision, coaching, and professional learning, and introduced and scaled restorative practices as a schoolwide approach to belonging, accountability, and culture.

Head of Family & Community Engagement / Dean of Students

Bentley Academy, Salem · 2014-2017

A founding member of the school's turnaround work, partnering with families, staff, and community organizations as the school achieved Level 1 status.

School Adjustment Counselor

Waltham Public Schools · 2006-2014

Eight years of direct practice with students and families — supporting transitions, emotional well-being, peer relationships, and academic stress, and connecting families to community resources.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS · CHELSEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS · 2022-PRESENT

Structures and supports

Young Parenting Program

PK-12 district leadership

Oversight of the grades 7-12 program supporting pregnant and parenting students to stay enrolled and on track.

Districtwide SEL

PK-12 district leadership

Leading PK-12 social-emotional learning implementation, curriculum alignment, and staff professional learning.

Mediation & Intervention Specialists

PK-12 district leadership

Building a program that resolves conflict early and keeps students connected to school.

School Mental Health & Telehealth

PK-12 district leadership

Coordinating clinical supports, telehealth providers, and youth mental health programming across schools.

McKinney-Vento, Migrant & Military Families

PK-12 district leadership

Ensuring students experiencing housing instability and transition receive enrollment, transport, and support.

Crisis Response & Safety

PK-12 district leadership

Leading crisis response protocols, de-escalation training, and districtwide safety coordination.

Grant Development

PK-12 district leadership

Writing and managing grants that fund student support, mental health, and family engagement work.

Data & Continuous Improvement

PK-12 district leadership

Using YRBS and districtwide survey data to shape priorities and measure whether supports are working.

Staff Leadership & Development

PK-12 district leadership

Supervising school social workers and multidisciplinary teams, and leading professional learning across the district.

Community Partnerships

PK-12 district leadership

Connecting schools with community organizations that extend care beyond the school day.

EVIDENCE IN PRACTICE

Chelsea Public Schools

Bilingual, bicultural supports

District practice

Building a team that reflects the community it serves — in Chelsea, a majority-Latino district with multilingual needs — so mental health support is genuinely accessible to every family.

Reaching families proactively

District practice

An annual districtwide mental health event drawing close to 1,000 families, alongside Parent University programming that builds familiarity with mental health support long before any individual family needs it.

A trusted person in every school

District practice

A family liaison in each of Chelsea's 11 schools, giving families a consistent, familiar person to talk to about what they and their students need — separate from any single referral moment.

Data that strengthens access

District practice

Monthly clinical consultancy meetings where the team reviews real-time referral data together, so access to care is measured, discussed, and improved rather than assumed.

ORIGINAL INITIATIVES

Programs she created

MijaLumbre Leadership Framework™

Creator

Developed a culturally grounded framework for Latina women leaders around identity, voice, purpose, and power, with a book, cohorts, and facilitated learning.

CoreKind360 Family Connect

Creator

Built a family-centered approach connecting character, belonging, and whole-child support across home, school, and community.

Innovate · Lead · Elevate

Educational consulting

Works with schools and organizations on leadership, student support, and systems change tailored to their goals.

PUBLIC & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Governance, boards and advisory work

Elected School Committee Member, Policy Chair & DEI Chair — Lynn School Committee

Current

Providing public governance, budget oversight, policy review, constituent communication, and accountability for district priorities; chairs Policy and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work through a student-centered, equity-minded, fiscally responsible lens.

Vice President, Lynn Hispanic Scholarship Fund

Current

Supporting access to higher education for Latino students in Lynn.

Commissioner, Essex County Commission for the Status of Women

2023-2026

Served on the National Association of Commissions for Women, advancing equity, opportunity, and women's rights across Essex County.

Board Member, Lynn Housing Trust Fund

Current

Advocating for housing stability as a foundation for student success.

National Advisory Board, Alongside

Current

Advising on youth mental health supports and how schools can reach students earlier.

Massachusetts Association for Mental Health Advisory Council

Current

Contributing a school-systems perspective to statewide mental health policy and practice.

Healthy Families Advisory Board

Current

Supporting programs that strengthen young families and early childhood well-being.

Advisory Council, Eliot Family Resource Center

Current

Guiding family-centered services that connect caregivers to mental health, wellness, and community resources.
