For over 30 years, **Melissa M. Nelson, Ed.D**., has developed a wealth of experience and

expertise in systems where K-12 education, mental health services, and legal system

sectors intersect. This is the source of her deep passion for serving schools, families,

and communities who care for children with the most complex emotional, behavioral,

and cognitive disabilities. For the past 18 years, Melissa served in a variety of roles in

urban, suburban, and rural education systems including personal care assistant,

elementary and special education teacher, and elementary and middle school

administrator. Most recently as the Senior Vice President of Educational Services, she

led the educational initiatives in an organization with specialized schools in six states for

children with significant behavioral disorders and cognitive disabilities. Melissa currently serves as a K-12 Schools Subject Matter Expert for the Southwestern PA Threat

Assessment Hub, a grant-based program supported by the University of Pittsburgh

Medical Center, PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and US Department of

Homeland Security.

Prior to her work in education, Melissa spent 14 years as a mental health clinician,

counselor, and advocate in various psychiatric, educational, and legal settings, including

Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic’s Emergency Room, The Center for Victims of

Violent Crime, the Allegheny County Emergency Services Mobile Crisis Unit, and the

Pressley Ridge School for the Deaf.

Melissa earned her bachelor’s degree in Child Psychology, Criminal Justice and

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Curriculum and Instruction from Gannon University, Master’s degree in Elementary and Special Education from California University of PA, K-12 Administrative Certification from California University of Pennsylvania, Master’s certificate in Paralegal Studies from Duquesne University, and a Doctorate in Administrative and Policy Studies with a focus on Educational Leadership from the University of Pittsburgh.