



Dr. Al Lewis

Glassboro Public Schools, Glassboro, New Jersey

INTRODUCTION

The recipient of the NASS 2024 Award for Excellence in Small School District Leadership, Dr. Al Lewis is a superintendent whose leadership is grounded in instructional improvement, transparent communication, community partnership, and hope-centered service. With nearly two decades of experience in education, he has served students, staff, families, and communities as a teacher, curriculum leader, and superintendent. His work reflects a deep belief that public schools are places of promise, where strong systems, courageous leadership, and meaningful relationships can help students thrive and communities move forward together.

Education

Dr. Al Lewis earned a Doctor of Education in Leadership and Administration from Walden University in 2024; a Master of Science in Literacy and Mathematics Education from Walden University in 2009; and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Elementary Education and History from Rowan University in 2006. He holds New Jersey certifications as a School Administrator, Principal, Supervisor, and Elementary Teacher.

Experience

Dr. Lewis serves as Superintendent of Schools for Glassboro Public Schools in Glassboro, New Jersey. His nearly two decades in public education include service as Superintendent of Weymouth Township School District, Curriculum Supervisor for Gloucester Township Public Schools, and elementary teacher in Voorhees Township Public Schools. Across those roles, his work has centered on instructional systems, staff development, student achievement, school safety, community engagement, and strengthening trust between schools and the communities they serve.

Outstanding Achievement(s)

Dr. Lewis was honored with the 2024 National Association of School Superintendents Excellence in Small School District Leadership Award and received Rowan University College of Education's 2025 Award for Outstanding Achievement in recognition of his work turning around a rural school district. In Glassboro, he is helping lead a renewed focus on student achievement, districtwide systems, transparent communication, and strategic partnerships, including the historic *Pathways of Promise* initiative with Rowan University. His leadership also includes efforts to strengthen school safety, elevate the district's story, and connect students more directly with college, career, and community opportunities.

AN INTERVIEW

Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.

Today's superintendent must be more than a manager of operations. The role requires instructional leadership, community building, fiscal stewardship, advocacy, and the steady courage to make difficult decisions while keeping students at the center. Families and staff need to know that the superintendent is visible, honest, and present. Boards need a leader who respects governance, communicates clearly, and helps convert vision into action. Students need adults who believe in their promise even when the data remind us how much work remains.

I also believe today's superintendent has to lead with hope. Hope is not pretending challenges are smaller than they are. It is the discipline of naming the truth, building the system, and bringing people together around the belief that improvement is possible. In a time when public education can be pulled into cynicism, distrust, and division, the superintendent has to model relentless optimism, the courage of transparency, and engaged hope.

What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?

I have learned that the speed of leadership is really the speed of trust. A superintendent can have a strong plan, but sustainable change depends on whether people understand the why, whether they see themselves in the work, and whether they believe the leader will stay steady when the work becomes difficult. Listening is not a step before leadership; it is part of the leadership itself.

I have also learned that systems matter more than slogans. A compelling vision can inspire people, but routines, data cycles, supervision practices, communication structures, and follow-through are what move a district forward. If we want student achievement to rise, we have to make the work visible, coherent, and repeatable. That means asking hard questions about Tier 1 instruction, curriculum alignment, attendance, professional learning, and how we support principals and teachers in real time.

Most importantly, I have learned that communities carry deep pride. In Glassboro, I see a community that honors its past while boldly claiming the promise of its future. The superintendent's job is to help people see that those two ideas belong together.

Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.

One idea I would share is to build a simple, consistent "promise to practice" cycle for every major initiative. Start with the promise: What are we trying to make better for students? Then define the practice: What adult behaviors, routines, or decisions have to change? Next, identify the evidence: How will we know whether it is working? Finally, establish the follow-up: Who owns the next step, and when will we revisit it?

This cycle keeps leaders from confusing activity with progress. It also helps boards, staff, families, and community partners understand how the district is turning vision into measurable action. Whether the work is achievement, safety, facilities, partnerships, or culture, the same questions apply. Public education improves when we keep our promises close enough to our daily practices that people can see the connection.

Submitted by:

Dr. Al Lewis

Name/Signature

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Date