

Shera Scott – Candidate Statement for President-Elect

Educational Background

My educational background includes a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential with an Early Childhood Specialization obtained from California State University, Fresno.

Professional Experiences

Upon graduating from college, I obtained my first elementary teaching position, and taught first and second grade for three years. I then went on to work for the next eighteen years as a teacher in the California State Preschool Program with Clovis Unified School District. The last four years have been spent as a Program Supervisor for the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program with Clovis Unified School District. The first three years I was a supervisor over five of our elementary school site programs, as well as the Kindergarten Program Supervisor in which I managed curriculum and professional development for our 150 employees working specifically with our transitional kindergarten and kindergarten students. In the last year I accepted a new position in which I am responsible for program quality at all of our 34 elementary school sites that offer the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program working specifically with the transitional kindergarten and kindergarten programs. Program quality tasks include curriculum development, professional development, developmentally appropriate classroom design and instructional support.

Early Childhood Organization Participation

Secretary, Governing Board Position, 2021-2023, California Association for the Education of Young Children

Conference Chair, Governing Board Position, 2016-2021, California Association for the Education of Young Children

President 2016-2018, Central California Chapter of the California Association for the Education of Young Children

President 2004-2006, Central California Chapter of the California Association for the Education of Young Children

Leadership Experience

In 2016, I was contacted regarding the current board status of the Central California Chapter of CAAEYC. At that time the Chapter was struggling to thrive and had found themselves in a place with no incoming board members. A group of past Chapter leaders met and discussed their own personal CAAEYC journeys and the work that would need to be done. It was an impactful afternoon, and I will never forget listening to each person explain how they had gotten involved with the organization and the people who influenced them. At the end of the meeting, I had agreed to serve a second term as the President of the Chapter. We worked together for the next two years and were able to strengthen the Chapter and bring it back to a highly functioning and respected organization in our area. This is one of my leadership experiences that I am most proud of not because of what I accomplished, but because of what I learned about being a leader. I might have been the one to stand at the podium, but without the people standing beside me our success would not have been possible. I learned the impact that one person can have on others and how a community can come together and work toward a common goal. I was inspired and humbled by the board members who were willing to stand with me. We truly did accomplish great things together and I will forever be grateful for the faith and trust they had in me. Leadership is a humbling experience and one which I am grateful for every day.

Diversity and Inclusion Experience

To be diverse and inclusive has a different meaning for each individual. As a collective group we understand the definition and the call to be inclusive and equitable. In order to really be accepting and represent the true meaning of diversity and inclusion, I must look at myself. We each bring our own understanding of these terms based on our own life experiences. In the various work I do and the people I engage with, diversity, inclusion and equity are a driving principle. Diversity is represented in many different aspects of our daily lives; it is complex and multilayered.

I have had many professional experiences that allowed me to use an inclusive and equitable mindset, ensuring diversity and inclusion for families, children, colleagues and community. As a classroom teacher, I worked at an elementary school, in a program that was aimed at meeting the needs of the youngest at-risk students in the school district. The students and families brought with them a wide range of life experiences. I believe that no matter what a person's background and experiences are, it is not the single definition of them and the diversity they bring to the environment.

Over the course of my career, I have worked and engaged with a wide variety of individuals, communities and programs. I work daily to include and support all families and children as well as colleagues and my community. This has always been my practice, and I know it is an area of constant growth and learning. I look forward to opportunities to continue learning and growing in this area as the President of CAAEYC.

In conclusion, meeting the needs of a diverse community is a walk I take every day. Being inclusive and equitable is part of a normal day filled with extraordinary people.

Contributions to CAAEYC

I believe I will bring the following experiences and skills to the CAAEYC Governing Board. I am task oriented but am flexible and accepting of the diversity of skills and methods that others offer. I have 29 years of experience with the organization in a variety of leadership roles and am familiar with the policies and procedures as well as the culture of CAAEYC. I served as the President of the Central California Chapter twice and although I had vastly different experiences with each term, I grew in my leadership skills and knowledge of the functioning of this position within the organization. The position of President requires a great deal of understanding, acceptance, and communication. Being neutral and representing everyone's best interest is a challenge, but one I feel I have had success in carrying out. I believe that everyone's voice has value, and we learn the most from those who have different life experiences from our own. This position requires consistency and the ability to stand strong and in alignment with CAAEYC's mission and values to maintain our policies and procedures while being open to the changes our field requires. I believe I have learned these skills in the variety of positions I have had within the organization.

Vision for CAAEYC

We are at a pivotal point in our state's history regarding early care and education. I strongly believe that CAAEYC is positioned to make a lasting impact on policies and the direction in which early care and education will take in the coming years. We must look at our structure and methods for carrying out our work, ensure they are inclusive and equitable and align it with the needs of our membership. Recruiting strong, dedicated team members for our board and committees will ensure the success and future of the organization. Our voice must continue to be relevant, and we must continue to strive for excellence in all that we do.