

Educational Philosophy

From the moment a student, staff member, parent, or visitor walks through the doors of a school, a sense of pride, security, love, and comfort should envelop them. As a classroom teacher, my philosophy was always to help my students acquire a love for math by creating an environment where a student was encouraged and comfortable to approach me while exhibiting patience with those who struggled. As an administrator, my philosophies have carried through to the students and staff members whom I am leading. Involvement in various activities should be encouraged and monitored because the community at large is paramount. Whether it is the chorus singing Christmas carols at our local nursing home or Student Council collecting food for the food pantries, our students realize that many people are not as fortunate as we are and they need our support and love.

Living the Golden Rule is a part of who I am, and something I try to convey to my students and faculty. The Golden Rule cannot be “learned” in a textbook or workshop, it is a part of who someone is. It can be “learned” or modeled by watching and following the actions of people around us. It does not give all the answers. If we disregard the Golden Rule, then we are disregarding the strength of fairness and concern that lies at the core of morality. Educational growth is imperative for teachers. Keeping current with trends and applying new ideas in a world where technology is rapidly changing is vitally important. Teachers always need to be encouraged, supported, and exposed to emerging ideas and new methods. Affording them the opportunities to develop professionally and spiritually is a priority. I strive to foster an environment that encourages my faculty to act as moral and educational role models to their students. As an administrator, I attempt to provide a climate conducive to doing so within the confines of the school building by applying my knowledge learned, love, and hope for the future.

As a leader, I must scrutinize and examine the culture. I believe that cultural leaders orchestrate challenging academic programs within that culture. It is important for all of the rites and the rituals of the school to be recognized as well as the school climate and basic values. What do people say the values, goals, mission of the school are and are the espoused values congruent with the artifacts? Organizational culture is not a tangible entity. It is the way things are “done”. Culture is experienced in a variety of ways. While some of the markers of an organization’s culture are quite visible, others are below the surface and somewhat difficult to unearth. Upon acceptance of my new position last year, it was important for me to define the culture and to discuss with various veteran faculty members, what changed and were the changes beneficial or substandard? Once there was a collaborative discussion with members of the faculty, administration and staff, the result was the redefinition of the culture and the beginning of the process of change.

For me, the fundamentals of educational leadership include knowing my weaknesses, being a good communicator, knowing what the needs of my constituents are, knowing my strengths and knowing how to accomplish what I need to do. People need to be empowered and empowerment of people needs a clear, attainable vision. I have clearly identified my vision with my faculty and staff and try on a daily basis to convince them that my vision has a good chance of being realized. During my recent hiring of numerous teachers, I explained my vision to prospective new hires so that I could build a solid foundation of those who share my perspective.

Teamwork and collaboration can only happen when people trust each other. We must put the same trust in other people that we put in ourselves and then release them to do the work. A leader must be a role model for his/her teachers. They must be strong and courageous, willing to take risks and try new things, with a desire to excel. Charisma is very important as it sets leaders apart from

other leaders. I try to model the expectations I have for my staff by being a person of action and inspiring and motivating my staff through my actions.

In order to change, you need to assess the current state. Change should not be sudden. Certain subtle changes can take place in the beginning of a transition of leadership with other changes gradually taking place after significant input. Strategic planning is imperative in implementing change. Current situations first need to be assessed and defined and then collaboratively change may begin. As an agent of that change, it is important to evaluate and to take into consideration all of the components of the organization, all of the stakeholders. Communication is a key element. The dialogue must never end.

The most important stakeholders, of course, are the students. As the teachers directly affect the students most of the day, instilling these qualities in the teachers and throughout the building will naturally funnel down to the children and build a community of healthy learners and faculty.