

# Educational Leadership Philosophy

My Philosophy of educational leadership is much akin to I--15—always under construction. But perhaps that perspective is a valuable component of my philosophy:

1) Education fundamentally implies reshaping perspectives as experience and knowledge increases. Flexibility and valuing prudent change are key. Things haven't always been the way they are, nor will they continue to be. A good leader is visionary and ready to transform schools as needed and bring students to college and career readiness—for a future that looks much different than the world today.

2) An educational leader who purports to have all the answers is likely wrong about much of it. Gone are the days when dictatorship in professional leadership is acceptable. 21st century leaders value the multiple perspectives of their faculty, staff, students, and community. Effective educational leaders of today appreciate diversity, welcome constructive feedback, and even seek out differing viewpoints as they go forward with a shared vision for their school.

That said, I believe the role of administration in schools is one of support, eliminating roadblocks, providing opportunities, and continual encouragement of all stakeholders in their unique roles on the path toward the shared vision.

So get out of the office and

value students.

Get into the halls and classrooms. Know the kids. I'll keep a binder of all the classroom pictures on my desk and have the names of all the students memorized as fast as my brain can tackle it. Calling a child by name helps them feel known, valued, important, and perhaps shocked just enough to inspire them to behave. (Jury might still be out on that, but I believe it.) Positive leadership trickles down through the faculty and staff and helps form the culture and climate of the school.

value families.

Parents know their children best and have the most vested interest in their success and well-being. Professional educators must honor and respect that. Research is undeniable— children's success in school and in life is drastically improved with parents who are involved. We should welcome parents, engage in positive and prompt communication, and seek to support families every way we can.

value teachers. Help teachers help students. They're not in it for the money—hire those with heart; appreciate the teachers you have. Identify areas of weakness and turn them into strengths through differentiated professional development. We differentiate for our students—we should for our teachers as well. They're not a mold of each other. Recognize the strengths on the faculty and utilize them. Let teachers shine. Let them contribute in their unique

2. ways. Develop a relationship of trust and conduct evaluations from a perspective of support and constructive feedback. Don't let them feel undervalued. Happy teachers mean positive learning environments, happier students, more enthusiasm, less behavioral issues. We can and should hold teachers to high standards—but an influential leader will provide and protect the time and resources teachers need to achieve them. ...value the support staff. Quietly, dedicatedly, and perhaps undervalued, are the many people who work hard to see that the school functions on a daily basis. The bathrooms need toilet paper. The children need to eat. The grass needs watered. Countless things need fixed through the endless use of hundreds of children every day. Everyone who walks in the door or calls on the phone needs something. How tiring the relentless demands can be if that person who is always there for everyone else is not known, seen, recognized, and appreciated. We shouldn't tell them how it is, but collaborate for most effective solutions, respecting our support staff by valuing their experience and insight into challenges that may arise around the school. See that they have what they need to succeed. I'm willing to bet that a school will magically run better if leadership would say good morning

to head custodian, administrative assistants, and the kitchen staff. ...value yourself. Work hard and efficiently. Prioritize and do your best. Then go home and regenerate and rejuvenate with family and a life outside of school. And come back ready to put in all you've got again. You'll have more to give when you're not burnt out. Realize that your response to situations around the school sets a tone, influences children's school experiences, shapes teachers' days, and affects families. I've developed two personal mantras that have helped me make professional decisions, improve communication, or handle challenging experiences: 1) "err on the side of love", and 2) "calm, confident, kind, competent". Be respectful and compassionate with others, and don't forget yourself in that. Overall—

- Communicate openly, timely, regularly and respectfully.
- Preemptively strike—communicate clear expectations from the start.
- Encourage and support the best in everyone.
- Believe that everyone's intentions are good, though they may not be representing it well in the moment. People sense that respect and tend to soften and communicate more kindly and reasonably.
- Believe in service leadership—approach others with the mentality of helping them achieve their role in the vision.
- Set an example of continuous learning and developing, valuing education.
- Look for ways to celebrate the good that is happening around the school.
- Look to expand other's experiences.
- Model data driven, goal oriented, and reflective practices.
- Be consistent, but willing to admit when something needs to change.