

Philosophy of Education

I have always taught, believed and administrated with the guiding principle of continued growth. That is summed up for me in an acronym I use called the CORE or center of an integrated individual.

C - CAN Believing in what is inside, the vision/view that each person is given and that each person can make happen in their lives.

O - OPTIONS There are always new ways of exploring and finding solutions to situations, problems and opportunities.

R - RISK As humans we need to exercise and keep alive our "risk muscle." I believe strongly in creating and maintaining an atmosphere and environment that allows that to happen.

E - ENTHUSIASM Celebrating, enjoying life. Allowing and letting the spirit of all soar to the heights that can be imagined.

Most of the experiences I have had with individuals as well as organizations is that their sights and dreams are set too small. They are capable of much success and there is fear of that success.

The American experience is built on its myriad diversity and that has been what makes possibilities where there were none before. Many times in the history of schooling we strive for unity while destroying the individual growth. We are at a time when we can actually envision an educational program developed for each student to meet each of their desires and needs. That is the direction where I would like to go as an educator and an administrator.

Data-Driven Instruction

We have the ability to assess gaps in student achievement not only at the summative level but at interim steps and at the formative stage. This gives educators the ability to teach to those gaps. The problems that have arisen are the nature of establishing a scope and sequence for students.

Now that there is an adoption of common core standards, educators and communities can access multiple sources. The ability to utilize this calls for a mastery of those materials – not only in the content but in the ability to deliver appropriate instruction to students through their individual learning styles and abilities.

This calls for a larger connection between staff members in addressing those needs with a direct focus on individualized student requirements. I have found that a powerful method is creating a professional learning community within each of the school environments as well as across the subject area disciplines.

Candidate Statement

James F. Rickley

Accomplishments

I entered the field of school administration primarily to be department chairman. While pursuing that goal, I encountered a central office administrator who advised me to continue in this arena. She mentioned that the profession needed the skills that I could bring to the table – namely, my abilities to work with community groups and organizations in the arts. She shared with me her experiences as a musician and in particular a concert pianist in building alliances rather than the trend of the past built on the philosophy of competitive coaches where there was always a winner and a loser.

I began my career then as an assistant principal in rural Pennsylvania bringing those skills and the growing technology culture to the table. I was recruited to Nevada to put into place a state-of-the-art school for a frontier ranching community. The facility was financed by the governor with the goal of creating a truly equitable educational environment where a child is not hampered by economics, size or location in receiving a world class education. Within five years that facility was completed and a wealth of educational possibilities opened for these students: the staff moved to a multi-leveled classroom where they became the leaders in differentiation for the state, there was a student/computer ratio of 1 student per 1.5 computers, students took courses in anything that met their master plan such as cosmetology, Italian, CISCO certification, dual credit programs were abundant with students concluding their high school experience with credits placing them as second semester sophomores in colleges.

I moved into the central office environment to work with data driven instruction. In that position, the Lander County School District embraced interim summative assessments, power standards incorporated, monitored and tracked in the classroom lesson design and then into the arena of formative assessments to meet the gaps in instructional effectiveness.

Management

Facilitating the school and district improvement teams and process taught me the real working significance and effectiveness of the philosophy of wisdom around that table rather than at the head.

Being the assistant superintendent means that as middle management, the ability to accomplish any act is through the workings of active listening and dialogue. I have found that there are real and harsh responsibilities that have to be accepted in the superintendent's position, every opportunity to engage in that dialogue with professional staff bears fruit in the mission of a district to foster student success.

Purpose of Application

I am conducting a national search. The position that I am seeking is an appropriate match between the candidate, the board, the community and the school district. I was mentored into school administration because of my background in the community arts. My Myers-Briggs profile (INFJ) and my learning style (right brained-connectivity learner) are not the current profile components for school leadership.

Candidate Statement

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My arts background has led me into areas of community building where the focused outcomes are always in the supportive – win-win attitude.

Relationships

The community is the central focus of the school system that is charged with educating its future. The board is the community's elected representative to accomplish this fact. The superintendent is the instrument to execute that plan and desired result in as professional and expert way as possible.

Accountability

Current legislation calls for a transparent view of the workings of the school from the home. This transparency demands a system of constructive conversation with a vocabulary that is devoid of jargon, focused on student achievement.

Diminishing Resources

As educators we need to embrace multiple delivery systems of education and measurement other than direct one-on-one instruction alone. My experience with electronic delivery systems as well as specific offerings from resources outside of the geographic restraints has proven to be a successful method.