

Leadership Philosophy

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

--John Quincy Adams

I have always defined a leader as one who can take people where they could not go themselves. Many educators fear change and do not want to move beyond their comfort levels. Since education is rapidly changing, school districts must adapt to meet the needs of all students. A superintendent, who is a true leader, can diminish those fears by demonstrating a clear coherent vision.

Just as a superintendent’s vision guides a district, the trust he instills anchors it. Trust is the foundation of leadership and to build trust, a leader must be competent, easily connect with people, and exemplify high character. It takes time but trust leads to credibility. Following through, having the courage to address challenges, and admitting when there are errors also strengthens relationships.

A superintendent with the ability to develop trust and work well with a wide range of people has the ability to lead transformational change. Nationally respected educator and author Doug Reeves says leaders can make decisions with their authority, but they can only implement those decisions through collaboration. I believe a collaborative process is powerful, and provides an opportunity for buy-in. Not all decisions can be made through collaboration but, the culture should be defined by involving the appropriate stakeholders when possible. Being able to involve others in decision making is a sign of a confident leader and often results in better decisions.

Exemplary school districts require effective leaders at all levels in the organization. The Board and superintendent set the tone; the principals are to be the instructional leaders and the teachers are to be role models. I also expect bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and custodians to provide leadership. Therefore, hiring the right people at all levels in the organization is imperative to the development of a healthy environment. Everyone should be committed to improvement and have a passion for kids.

Organizations with leadership depth at every level obviously have strong guidance at the top. Leadership speaker and author John Maxwell talks about the “Law of Navigation” and the need for leaders to chart the course for their organization. Having confidence in the leader and knowing where the organization is going allows those inside the organization to become empowered and passionate.

As Broken Arrow’s superintendent, I would be passionate in working with the Board to create the vision and chart the course toward ensuring our students and all in the district excel. To borrow from John Quincy Adams again, I would strive to see that my actions “inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more.”