

Educational Leadership Philosophy: Robert Cawson

Your beliefs do not make you a better person, your behavior does. This statement rings true on so many occasions, but none more than education. Education and school have always been the central point, hub if you will, of our communities. Traditionally, schools have always been relied on for instilling wisdom and knowledge for our present and current generations, but more so for the connections they create among the community. Teachers were always looked upon and respected for their work they do with their students as they were responsible for making an effort to connect with parents and families to bring them in on the learning process. They developed intelligence, but more so, they developed good people. It truly takes a village to take on such a responsibility as these traditions remain true today.

As an educational leader, it is my belief that bringing a community together to share the leadership in many different aspects is essential. In many professional reads, you will see gurus like Todd Whitaker, Robert Marzano, and Simon Sinek mention in their own words, "leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders." Within the school community, it all starts at the top in working with others to develop their leadership in every position and level. To do so, you focus on an individual's strengths through strength-based inquiry. This shows that you value their expertise first, which builds trust, and establishes a relationship. This is vital to the morale of an organization. Only then, you can look to help people develop in other areas. Establishing these relationships helps to push everyone, including yourself, be better every day. When this belief is held and acted upon, it eventually translates down to students in the classroom. Effective teachers are effective leaders and will model this same approach you have with their students. Building leadership in all areas will help us be more successful within our vision of putting students first and make our world a better place.

With this focus on developing leadership, schools will be more successful in navigating our ever-changing world, and more importantly, lead change. Our society is constantly changing. Schools must adapt to best serve our students for their future and their present. It is the schools and leaders that are willing to adapt and learn from the changes now who will be the ones most likely to be successful in the future. We see these changes in our world every single day. We see different jobs popping up, others disappearing, beliefs and morals transitioning to new times, and more people utilizing technology as an essential component of life. We must look to develop students who are not only ready for these changes, but other changes to come. To do so, it involves promoting that leadership within our educators by instilling upon them the desire to develop and further the organization. Instilling this mindset, gives a share of ownership to all which promotes better systems that focus on student achievement through all hands, and minds, on deck. We must look and build on what has worked, what is working, and what will work as we move forward with our systems currently in place.

One of the biggest changes our world is seeing is this idea of everything in our environment becoming transparent. As a school leader, I have the benefit of becoming better in all aspects of education by visiting classrooms and seeing what effective teachers are doing. Teachers do not always have the same opportunity because of the way the system is set. However, nowadays because of the newest technology like Twitter and professional websites, or blogs, we can now open up our classrooms to other educators within our schools, our state, and our world. This

worldwide collaboration helps us focus on what is most important, and that is what is best for our students. Now, more than ever with our very connected society, we cannot only look out for our own students, but must look out for others from around the world. We must create a culture of sharing within our community that allows us to learn from others around the globe and within our own community. There are so many valuable resources in our world that we must tap. We must bring in as many as we can to continuously learn and grow; to better our world.

In addition, we must have a purpose within our systems. This includes parents, who are a great resource that is often underutilized within our own communities. 20 years ago, it was common for students to go home and be asked the question, “what did you learn today?”, and respond with, “nothing.” Today, we can no longer have this happen in order to keep up with our world. We must open our doors to our schools and classrooms through as many avenues as possible, including through technology. We have the opportunity to make a huge positive impact on so many children and their families. We can have parents actively involved in the process of learning which will lead to a higher chance of opportunity for success of all students. As many teachers would say, there are never enough hands and minds in education. The more we can involve parents in the learning process at home, the more likely students will be successful, not only in school, but in life to come. Community is essential as it is the heartbeat of the education system.

In conclusion, I believe in building relationships, developing leaders, and focusing on our schools as the central point of our community. With this beliefs, we are more likely to create an environment where our students are building their today, and their tomorrow. With our rapidly changing world, we will continue to look at what has worked before while looking to develop our future. In doing so, our community is more likely to be able to come together to create the schools our kids need. In return, we will be making our global community a better place for future generations to come.