

The attached educational project by Joshua Jensen, entitled Educational Administrator Portfolio Reflection Paper, when completed, is to be submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Education degree, for which 3 credits shall be allowed, is hereby:

Approved *Dr. Wally Inelin* Date: October 20, 2009  
Paper Advisor

# Educational Administrator Portfolio Reflection Paper

An Educational Project

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

Educational Administration

By Joshua J. Jensen

Year of Graduation – 2009

## Introduction

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville Educational Administration Certification Program significantly improves an individual's ability to teach and thoroughly prepares individuals for all aspects of administration. This cohort program includes twenty-four credits, offered on Saturdays and during the summer for a two-year period. Additionally, students have the option of securing a Master of Science in Education by completing an additional 12 specified credits before, during, or after the Educational Administration Certification Program. However, in order to be recommended for certification, the candidate must possess a master's degree and complete the twenty-four credit educational administration program. (UWP, 2009).

While participating in this Educational Administration Certification Program, I received an introduction and overview of the entire Educational Administration Certification program. I was then able to work with a variety of experienced administrators and a wonderful group of aspiring administrators to develop an understanding of personnel issues, classroom management, community relations, school climate, relationships with the district office, school board members, school culture, diversity issues, and management styles. We were also provided guidance on how to effectively manage organizations, operations, and resources of a school system in order to ensure a safe, efficient and effective learning environment. We developed a working knowledge of the law as it relates to the school administrator by researching and resolving legal issues that have an impact on school operations. We also had extensive field experience and networking opportunities related to the management of school systems, such as budgeting and finance, personnel planning, policy use and development, and facilities use coordination (UWP, 2009).

The Educational Administration Certification Program does a wonderful job of preparing prospective administrators to be instructional leaders in their schools and is built around the ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "To receive a license in a school administrator category in Wisconsin, an applicant shall complete an approved program in school administration and demonstrate proficient performance in the knowledge, skills and dispositions under all of the following standards." (Wisconsin, 2009). The following pages will identify and define each of the seven Wisconsin Administrator Standards and the included ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards. Additionally, I will reflect on specific experiences that demonstrate my competence in each of these standards.

## **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1**

**The administrator has an understanding of and demonstrates competence in the Ten Teacher Standards.**

The development of an educational portfolio during my undergraduate years at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville demonstrated my competence in the ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards. Through numerous classes and practicum experiences, I was able to compile evidence to show that I am a reflective practitioner who is a lifelong learner and dedicated to giving students the best possible education. These experiences enabled me to earn my Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and receive my license to teach in the State of Wisconsin. Since graduation, I have had many additional experiences that further demonstrate my competence in the ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards. These experiences have come from teaching, coaching, and administrative duties and continue to improve my ability as an educator. The following Wisconsin Administrative Standards 1.1 – 1.10 are just a few examples of these experiences that have helped form a solid foundation for my administrative responsibilities.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.1**

**The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for pupils.**

The art curriculum that I developed in cooperation with my administrator and colleagues at Saint Clement School is based on the Art Standards developed by the Diocese of Madison and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. My art curriculum best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.1 – Content and Curriculum. It shows that I understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structure of Art. The development of this art curriculum demonstrates that I can create meaningful learning experiences in Art that are based on Diocesan and State Standards and are significant to my students.

Creating and applying an art curriculum has taught me to develop an understanding of what is important for students to learn about art at each age level. It has also helped me to develop communication with administrators, colleagues and artists to enhance my ability as a teacher. Creating meaningful art projects that are rooted in standards and connect with real life experiences helps students appreciate the beauty, complexity and richness of the world around them. I have also learned that students can become creative problem solvers and are allowed personal growth and expression through Art.

As an administrator, I have realized the importance of developing and implementing an effective curriculum for each subject. I will expect my staff to familiarize themselves with State and Local Standards in their discipline and apply this knowledge to their teaching. I will also encourage teachers to connect with other professionals to enhance teaching ability and improve student learning. As Dr. Marlow Ediger stated, we need to “set the stage...for principals and teachers working together to develop the best curriculum possible for students.” (Ediger, 2009).

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.2**

**The teacher understands how children with broad ranges of ability learn and provides instruction that supports their intellectual, social, and personal development.**

The lesson plans that I created to introduce sixth grade science students to a unit on sound at Lancaster Middle School is an example of my competency in the Wisconsin Teacher Standards. This lesson plan best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.2 – Development and Learning. It shows that I understand how children with broad ranges of ability learn as I use teaching strategies like scaffolding to introduce new ideas to students existing knowledge. Building upon past success to create new success helps to support the intellectual, social, and personal development of each student.

Creating this lesson plan to introduce sound taught me about the importance of using new teaching techniques to reach all students. Scaffolding worked very well for this particular unit as all students started with the book definition of sound and then built upon that knowledge by using familiar objects and experiences. Scaffolding is the process through which learning efforts are supported while students are engaged in a learning environment (Dickerson, Williams, & Browning, 2009). I learned that connecting the information from the book to

actually making a crude record player made learning fun and meaningful for all students in the class.

As an administrator, I have realized the importance of varying teaching techniques to better reach all students. Teachers should realize the importance of continuing to self-improve and staying aware of best teaching practices. As an administrator, it is my job to make sure teachers understand that students possess varying backgrounds and intelligences. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher to find ways in which all students can make some connection to the information.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.3**

**The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.**

Collaborating with other physical education teachers led me to a Cooperative Games Unit Plan that I taught to Physical Education students in grades 3-6 at Saint Clement School. This unit plan best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.3 – Diverse Learners. It shows that I understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and that I am able to adjust the games we play to meet the diverse needs of all students. Students that ranged from having disabilities to having exceptionalities learned to work together to achieve common goals.

The Cooperative Games Unit helped me to realize how different and unique individual students and teachers are. Every individual has their own God-given strengths and weaknesses. As educators, it is our responsibility to find ways in which students can work and play together to achieve common goals. In this instance, I learned many different ways to group students and organized games in which the desired outcome depended on working well with others. Simply grouping according to ability has been found to be advantageous to advanced learners and disadvantageous to struggling students (Tomlinson, 2006).

As an administrator, I have realized the importance of students and teachers working together. Just like our students, staff members each have their own strengths and weaknesses. It is very important that I group staff members together in a manor that will be most beneficial for the students and school. I will also use tools such as “T.E.A.M. Dynamics” to help staff

understand each other better so that we can all work cooperatively in a healthier environment for everyone.

#### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.4**

**The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies, including the use of technology to encourage children's development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.**

My research into educational methods led me to a problem-based learning exercise that I have taught as a web quest to middle school students at Lancaster Middle School, Saint Charles School, and Saint Clement School. This problem based learning web quest best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.4 – Instructional Strategies. It shows that I understand and use a variety of instructional strategies, like Problem Based Learning and include the use of technology in the web quest. This demonstrates my ability to develop children’s critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

The Buck Institute for Education defines standards-focused PBL as “a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.” (BIE, 2009). The problem based learning problem is one example of how I learned to vary my instructional strategies to keep class exciting. Problem based learning relies on students encountering problems that have multiple solutions. In this instance they read an article about “Hot-Headed Moles in Antarctica” and must determine its authenticity. They must gather new information, in this case from the internet, to come up with possible solutions. As an educator, I learned how to guide my students toward alternative solutions and enhance their problem solving skills.

As an administrator, I have realized the importance of varying instructional strategies. The days of the “sage on the stage” are gone. Teachers and administrators must constantly be searching for new techniques to relay information and develop skills in students. The majority of school mission statements that I have seen have something in them about developing students to become problem solvers in a new age of technology. As a result, lessons like this one should become more of a norm in today’s classrooms.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.5**

**The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.**

My classroom experiences and my research into student motivation led me to develop a classroom management plan which ensures that my classroom is a welcoming environment which allows each student the best possible chance to learn. This classroom management plan best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.5 – Learning Environment. It shows that I understand individual and group motivation and behavior through my described classroom management techniques. From simple eye contact and gestures to a clearly defined discipline plan, I work to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Developing my classroom management plan taught me how to create a positive learning environment to increase my students' chances for success. I started by developing a personal philosophy about making a connection with each student and showing respect and concern for each student's success in order to earn their respect. From this basic philosophy I was able to improve upon management techniques like creating an effective discipline plan, using positive reinforcement, and organizing the classroom.

As an administrator, I have realized the importance of creating a classroom management plan. As Bo Ryan once told me, "Plan your work and work your plan." Proper preparation is crucial for success in the classroom and in life. As an administrator, I will always require teachers to develop their own classroom management plans. It is also important that teachers realize the difference between a classroom management and a discipline plan. A discipline plan should be in line with the school-wide philosophy and be a part of each teacher's management plan. According to Harry K. Wong, "The key to managing behavior is not discipline, but rather an effectively run classroom." (Hennick, 2007).

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.6**

**The teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.**

Option C is a Student Management System we piloted at Saint Charles School through the Diocese of Madison to enhance communication between teachers, students, and parents. The Option C Student Management System best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.6 – Communication. It shows that I am able to use effective communications techniques and instructional media and technology to promote collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. Option C also enabled students and parents to become more active in the assessment process and inquire more about what was happening in the classroom.

Using the Option C Student Management System taught me how to organize my lesson plans, grade book, attendance, and classroom announcements/calendar into one easy to manage system. It took a lot of work initially, but once I got used to it, Option C made teaching easier and opened the lines of communication with families. There weren't any more surprises come report card time because student and parents were able to track progress throughout the school year.

As an administrator, I have realized the importance of organizing classroom information into a system that facilitates communication between schools and homes. Student information systems manage student data throughout an entire school district. According to Sharlene Karbowski, "This can include student registration, student demographics, attendance, grades, students' courses, health and discipline information." (Karbowski, 2005). I will look to incorporate Option C or a similar Student Information System at my school. This experience has taught me that I may be met with initial apprehension from my staff, but through persistence and communication it will pay big dividends.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.7**

**The teacher organizes and plans systematic instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, pupils, the community, and curriculum goals.**

I have organized team building field trips for fourth grade students from Saint Charles and Saint Clement at the Bethel Horizons Adventure & Wilderness Center. Organizing these field trips best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.7 – Instructional Planning. They show that I am able to write grants for funding, then plan and organize field trips that provide systematic instruction for my students. These field trips also show that I am able to connect knowledge of my students and their curriculum with the community we live in.

Developing a quality learning experience outside the classroom has taught me that field trips take a lot of hard work and preparation but can also prove to be extremely rewarding for students and staff. I have learned how to connect with agencies in the community to secure funding for quality educational opportunities. I have also learned how to utilize local attractions to enhance students' connections between classroom curriculum and the real world. Bethel Horizons helped teach our fourth grade students how to build group cohesion and develop problem solving skills while learning safe alternatives to drugs and alcohol.

As an administrator, I have realized the importance of organizing instruction so that it connects school curriculum with real world opportunities in our communities. As Sherry Lee Linkon stated in *Going Public: Teaching and Learning in the Community*, it is important “to incorporate community into the curriculum by taking students out of the classroom and into their neighborhoods and towns.” (Linkon, 2006). I encourage all teachers to look for educational opportunities outside the confines of the school building that can help students develop a deeper level of understanding of the knowledge learned in the classroom. I have also developed an understanding of the entire process of organizing, leading, and funding a safe learning experience for the school.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.8**

**The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the pupil.**

We utilized specific evaluation forms to judge all entries at the Local Level of the National History Day Contest at Lancaster Middle School. Using this National History Day Evaluation Form best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.8 – Assessment. It shows that I understand and can use formal assessment strategies such as a rubric to evaluate student

work based upon predetermined judging criteria. Additionally, I was able to use informal assessment during the project to ensure continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of my students. Judging the National History Day Projects helped me learn how to create a formal assessment of students by creating a rubric. Rubrics are a very valuable assessment tool because the students understand how they will be assessed before they even begin their project. The rubrics also ensure that every student will be assessed using the same criteria. Angela Leonhardt identifies the following steps for creating an original rubric: 1) Determine concept or skill to be taught. 2) Isolate 3-5 evaluation components. 3) Design scoring grid with graduated levels of proficiency. 4) Determine performance pieces, songs, or games that would best help students demonstrate the evaluation components. 5) Locate materials for assessment and record keeping, 6) Share rubric with students prior to final assessment. (Leonhardt, 2005). This all helped me to realize the importance of authentic assessment in which students perform tasks and create projects to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

As an administrator, I have developed skills that have enabled me to better assess all students. I will be able to help teachers incorporate authentic assessments and rubrics into their curriculum. I have also developed a better understanding of the wide range of formal and informal assessments, like portfolios and journals, which can be used to better assess a wide variety of students.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.9**

**The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effect of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.**

Governor Doyle and Superintendent Burmaster sent me a letter to congratulate me on participating in the 2007 Wisconsin School Leadership Academy in Madison, Wisconsin. Attending the Leadership Academy best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.9 – Reflection. It shows that I actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally. Also, when I

reflected upon what I learned at the Academy and presented that knowledge to others, I demonstrated that I am a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effect of my choices and actions on pupils, parents, and professionals in the learning community.

Attending and reflecting upon the presentations of Dr. Leonard Sax, Rick Smith, and other nationally recognized presenters taught me the importance of life-long learning. As educators, we must make a conscious effort to attend professional development opportunities that keep us abreast with current best practices and cutting edge trends in education. I also learned that attendance at these events is not enough. We must learn to reflect upon our newfound knowledge and incorporate it into our own schools.

As an administrator, I have developed a greater appreciation for the concept of professional development and reflection. As Donald A. Schon argues in his new book, "...education should be centered on enhancing the practitioner's ability for 'reflection-in-action' - that is, learning by doing and developing the ability for continued learning and problem solving" (Schon, 1987). I will be an advocate for continual reflection and self-improvement of my staff. I will look for grant opportunities and other funding to ensure that my staff has the opportunity to continually improve their skills so that student learning is enhanced and in line with the times.

#### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.10**

**The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support pupil learning and well being and who acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.**

My numerous coaching experiences over the past decade in basketball, softball, track, and golf have given me the opportunity to connect with students, parents, teachers, and members of the community. These coaching experiences best align with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.10 – Collaboration. They show that I have fostered relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support the well being of

my students. They also show that I act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner that is in line with school philosophy.

My coaching experiences have taught me how to get along with and earn the respect of players, coaches, referees, parents, teachers, and members of the community. I have learned that sports are a very powerful learning opportunity in all school settings. They conjure very strong feeling from a wide variety of individuals and provide students with valuable life lessons. As a coach, I learned how to be very diplomatic and have fun in an intensely competitive arena. I also realized the importance of understanding what middle level athletics is all about. As stated by McEwin and Swaim in *Trends and Issues in Middle-Level Sports*, "The emphasis in middle-level sports programs should be on enhancing self-esteem and developing social and physical skills within reasonably competitive environments. All young adolescents should have opportunities to participate and receive the benefits of sports programs that reflect their developmental needs and interests. Sports participation for young adolescents should be fun!"(McEwin and Swaim, 2009). These lessons and skills are very important in teaching, administration, and in life.

As an administrator, I feel that the aforementioned skills are even more crucial. There is a reason why many successful coaches also make successful administrators. I have learned that both jobs take a large level of commitment, planning, preparation, practice, and communication. Coaches learn to get the most out of individual players and to get them all to work together as one cohesive unit. As an administrator I will work to do the same with my team of teachers so that we can provide our students with the best possible learning opportunities.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 2**

**The administrator leads by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared by the school community.**

There is a new mission plaque that is proudly displayed in the entrance of Saint Clement School. I worked with a local sign maker to create this work of art that explains the foundation of education at our wonderful school. Creating this mission plaque to advertise and better communicate the importance of our foundational statements on education best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 2. It shows that I am an educational leader who promotes the

success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Working with students, staff, parents, and school organizations to develop foundational statements to guide education in our school has taught me the importance of collaboration and conviction. Having the entire school community in agreement of a solid mission statement and direction of operation in a school is vital to success. Research has shown that the most important difference between mission statements of high performing schools and low performing schools is that the mission statements of high performing schools focused on providing a challenging environment that focused on academic success (Slate, Jones, Wiesman, Alexander, & Saenz, 2008). I have also learned the importance of annually reviewing these foundational statements to ensure they are in line with the needs of students in today's society.

As an administrator, I have developed a greater appreciation of the need for foundational statements to guide education in my school. Foundational statements must be agreed upon by the school community and effectively communicated to ensure everyone involved is working towards a common goal that is most beneficial for the education of all students. Administrators should always be able to reference solid foundational statements to help answer any questions that may arise.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 3**

**The administrator manages by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth.**

The upcoming National Catholic Education Association Convention is scheduled to be held in Minneapolis, MN. Following my experiences at the 2008 NCEA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis, I have made arrangements for my entire staff to join me at this wonderful professional development opportunity. Organizing this professional development opportunity and securing the necessary funding required best align with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 3. It is a demonstration of my ability to manage by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a

school culture and instructional program conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth.

I have developed an understanding of how professional development opportunities and continuing education can greatly improve student learning. One example includes the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative. According to their website, this program "was designed by teachers for teachers in order to provide technical support, professional development opportunities, and recognition for teachers of all content areas and grade levels. Research confirms that teachers are the single most important factor in raising student achievement and the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative aims to strengthen the Department's efforts to provide the necessary support for teachers." (Teacher, 2009). Teachers that actively seek out opportunities to improve their effectiveness in the classroom provide students with the best possible chance for success. This is also true of an administrator who takes advantage of these opportunities and models this behavior to teachers and students.

As an administrator, I realize that lifelong learning and professional development are two keys to the success of any educator. I have witnessed the opportunities available to improve education in my school through attendance at national conventions. The abundance of applicable resources and the ability to collaborate with so many educators allows my school to take advantage of current best practices in education to improve student learning.

#### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 4**

**The administrator ensures management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.**

The Diocese of Madison has provided me with a workbook to help guide me through the process of creating an annual budget for the operation of Saint Clement School. Utilizing diocesan resources to create a financially sound budget best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 4. It is one example that demonstrates my ability to ensure management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

The entire process of creating a budget for the operation of a school is a real eye opening experience. It helps me to develop a better understanding of everything that is involved in providing a top notch education for all students. As a teacher it can be frustrating to not receive the financial support one feels is necessary to properly educate students. As an administrator, I have a greater appreciation of the difficulties created from limited resources. I have developed an understanding of how to secure additional resources through grants, donations, volunteers, etc. to enhance student learning.

As an administrator, I understand the amount of time, planning, and collaboration necessary to develop a budget that best utilizes limited resources to give all students a quality education. I learned the importance of working with colleagues and specialists to create an environment that is in line with our foundational statements and maximizes educational opportunities with the funds available. I believe that money is too often used as an excuse for underachieving schools. I am proud to have administration experience in a Catholic school that accepts this challenge and makes the most of our resources. As former President Bush acknowledged, "Catholic schools have a proven record of bringing out the best in every child, regardless of their background." He then "showered praise on Catholic schools for achieving strong academic results on shoestring budgets and holding high expectations for all children." (Zehr, 2004).

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 5**

**The administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.**

Advertising in local and diocesan newspapers was one way to promote Catholic Schools Week activities which are held annually at Saint Clement School during the last week of January. Organizing Catholic Schools Week activities best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 5. It demonstrates my competency in modeling collaboration with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Organizing Catholic Schools Week has helped me to realize the importance of advanced planning. Planning occurs throughout the year to organize outside resources and activities that promote the benefits of a Catholic education in the span of just one week. This involves working with local news agencies, local businesses, other schools, parish organizations, parents, teachers, students, and others to create a week's worth of learning opportunities that connect with a national theme and celebrate Catholic schools.

As an administrator, I understand the importance of utilizing parents and the outside communities to diversify the curriculum, provide real-life connections, and improve student learning. I realize that I have the ultimate control over the effectiveness of school activities and student success. I have also developed an understanding of the effort required in thoroughly planning activities throughout the school year that will enhance the curriculum and ultimately improve student learning and school morale.

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 6**

**The administrator acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.**

I have a copy of the American Association of School Administrators Statement of Ethics for Educational Leaders framed in my office. My utilization of this code of ethics best align with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 6. It shows that I am dedicated to acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

The AASA Code of Ethics has helped me to understand the standards that I am held accountable for as an educational leader. This document hangs on the wall above my desk as a constant reminder to me and my staff of the expectation that I have. I often refer to the first standard of this Code of Ethics which states, "The educational leader makes the education and well-being of students the fundamental value of all decision making." (AASA, 2009). Establishing an understanding of ethics by all teachers and students will help ensure equal opportunities for everyone, accountability, and increased expectation in school and in society.

As an administrator, I understand that I will inevitably encounter a variety of challenges and be responsible for many important decisions. Some of these decisions are made following a period of research, collaboration, and reflection. Other decisions need to be made very quickly,

without help from others. I have learned to ask myself one question before coming to any decision: What is in the best interest of the education and well-being of all my students?

### **Wisconsin Administrator Standard 7**

**The administrator understands, responds to, and interacts with the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context that affects schooling.**

I was invited to and chose to attend the AWSA Legal Seminar in Wisconsin Dells on December 3, 2008. My attendance at the AWSA Legal Seminar best aligns with Wisconsin Administrator Standard 7. It shows that I have a desire to understand, respond to, and interact with the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context that affects schooling. The AWSA Legal Conference was an excellent opportunity for me to interact with fellow administrators and participate in informational sessions that provide tools for improving the school environment and student learning. Administrators and teachers that are aware of current issues facing schools are able to approach them proactively, decreasing the likelihood and severity of potential problems. One particular topic of focus of this seminar pertained with legal rights involved with the use of technologies such as cell phones, computers, and the cyber world. A recent survey of the Council of School Attorneys showed that legal issues are too expansive to list on a survey. Some critical issues include: "special education and charter schools...single ballots for school finance, immigration, facilities and construction disputes, church/state separation, family custody disputes, school safety, parents' rights, board-superintendent relations, and the effect of high-stakes testing on classroom instruction and student achievement." (What, 2009)

As an administrator, I believe that attending conferences such as the AWSA Legal Conference is imperative to my success. First, the opportunity to interact with fellow administrators and share ideas is very important to school improvement. Secondly, the information gained from the presentations provides me with valuable information that I can apply in my school. As I pass this knowledge on to teachers, we develop an understanding of current issues facing students and schools in our area. This awareness is the first step to creating legally sound policy that will help ensure that all students are given the best chance to learn in a safe and caring environment.

## **Conclusion**

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville Educational Administration Certification Program does a wonderful job of preparing competent school administrators with a solid foundation in academics and real-life administrative skills. A crucial part of this preparation was the development of an electronic portfolio that aesthetically showcases our competence in each of the seven Wisconsin Administrator Standards. We have learned to become reflective practitioners and lifelong learners that are prepared to handle a myriad of unpredictable situations on a daily basis. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn so much about education in such a short amount of time. I am also very thankful for the friendships and connections that I have made along the way that will inevitably help me through a long and successful career in administration.

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