

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION REFLECTION PAPER

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EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH PAPER

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Abstract

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH PROJECT

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The University of Wisconsin-Platteville Master of Science Education Degree and Educational Administration Certificate provides many opportunities to learn and develop as a future administrator. The course work and administration hours develop educational leaders through leadership experiences through course work, practicum hours and completion of standards. The program also helps to develop skills for a building administrator including developing leadership, communication, vision, integrity, school law and management. The program provides experience working closely with class members to develop relationships, manage organizations, and improve school culture. The administration hours and course work develop leadership skills through interaction with others, collaborating with team members, and developing new initiatives within a working school. These interactions have included course work on budgeting and new initiatives for school improvement, working with the grading and assessment committee at the School District of Monroe, a teacher exchange program with Costa Rican teachers, as well as leading book clubs and being part of the referendum committee. These skills are shown through competency in the Wisconsin Standards for Administration. This paper will discuss the seven Wisconsin Administrator Standards, the ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards and the practicum experience completed at University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Becoming a qualified principal takes dedication and a working knowledge of schools. To be qualified for this position, an aspiring administrator must learn by doing. Through the Educational Leadership program, an aspiring administrator can learn the many facets of the role of principal, and transition from the role of teacher to one of principal. Using the Wisconsin State Administrator and Teacher Standards as a guide, an aspiring administrator can become prepared for a new role as principal.

Method and Procedures

Through action research that involves practicum experience, an aspiring administrator can become prepared for a new role as an administrator. Following the standards, the administrator can develop new initiatives and work with colleagues to prepare for leadership within a school. Once completed, the experience will have provided opportunity for better educational leadership skills.

Summary of Results

From this research it can be found that an aspiring administrator will be prepared after completing experience in all of the seven educational administration standards. Through the work at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, a future administrator will be well prepared for the role as an administrator.

Chapter II:

Organization of Educational Project Paper

The following paper will discuss the various ways that a person can become prepared for the role of principalship. It will discuss the seven Wisconsin Administration Standards analyzing experiences in the ten teacher standards and seven administration standards.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1: The administrator has an understanding of and demonstrates competence in the 10 teacher standards.

The following standards show a working knowledge of teaching and learning. To complete an educational administration degree at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, one must demonstrate competency in the Wisconsin Administration Standards through an educational portfolio. Through educational experience, one can develop as a reflective practitioner who encourages teachers and students to become engaged, interested, life-long learners. Experience teaching in Monroe School District provided the aspiring administrator with many opportunities to become involved in the district, and has helped to solidify communication, collaboration and leadership skills. The Educational Administration Cohort at UW-Platteville has also helped to develop skills as an educational leader. The following are examples of how an aspiring administrator can develop competency in the Ten Wisconsin Teacher Standards, which are part of the Seven Administration Standards.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.1: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

The administrative candidate understands the central concepts that are needed for teachers to provide quality education in schools through developing, teaching and facilitating

research curriculum. As a future administrator, the working knowledge of developing curriculum will help the administrative candidate facilitate new curriculum in a school. The research curriculum that was developed by the administrative candidate and fourth grade teachers at Northside Elementary School taught students how to ask and answer questions about a topic. In this Native American unit students learned from answering questions and creating meaningful subject matter about the topic. Students learned how to research without plagiarizing, take notes, and show their learning through writing and developing projects. The teachers modeled how to research and then students researched, took notes, and wrote an essay. The students' learning was meaningful because the students were responsible for it. Each child researched a tribe with a partner, had full ownership of the notes and writing and then presented the project to the class.

From this experience, the aspiring administrator learned that it is important for teachers to plan and model learning outcomes for students. Students learned how to take notes and research without plagiarizing. This is a crucial academic lesson for students because they have a model to build upon and are working together with the teacher to develop research skills that will be used throughout the student's life. The aspiring administrator can now assist other teachers in providing learning opportunities for teaching research.

As an aspiring administrator, completing this lesson also shows the importance of teacher developed lessons. When teachers go through the steps of lessons with others and for students they will do a better job teaching. In this unit, the teachers taught students about Native Americans in a way that improved students' ability to think, write, and present. A principal can encourage teachers to develop new curriculums using the Independent Investigations Method (IIM).

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.2: The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.

The aspiring administrator will support teachers through the experience of developing and teaching descriptive writing. The descriptive writing plans that the administration candidate developed, provides learning opportunities through the examples of descriptive writing. This lesson was student centered because it provided time for students to think, interact, discuss, write, proofread and improve their work. From this experience of developing lessons and teaching writing, the administrative candidate will be prepared to observe teachers and analyze whether the teacher is providing learning opportunities that support the intellectual, social and personal development of students.

As an aspiring administrator, it will be important to serve as an educational leader in the building. As the new principal evaluates a teacher, the principal will want to see what types of modeling the teacher is doing. The experience of teaching writing will provide the administrator with the ability to help support teachers during the evaluation process. When the administrative candidate observed teachers, he or she will also look for students discussing topics with each other, working collaboratively and independently. After the observation, the principal will want to ask questions about how much time the teacher provided for the development of the lesson. The principal should also ask about what feedback or support the teacher provided the students were working on their lessons. As the observer, the administrator will give clear feedback on how the teacher taught the lesson and provided learning opportunities in the classroom.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.3: The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

It is essential for administrators to understand and communicate acceptance and expectation for the teachers and students. Administrators must encourage teachers to develop lessons that meet the needs of diverse learners. Adapting lessons to the diverse needs of students ensures that all students in a school learn.

As an administrator, the principal must encourage and then mentor teachers to ensure that lessons are developed to meet the needs of diverse learners. To meet student's unique needs, principals need to help teachers understand that providing various ways for children to learn will increase student's success in school. If teachers are not modifying instruction for diverse learners then it is the administrator's job to help teachers see that they need to change the lessons. The administrator can do this by providing professional opportunities to learn about new teaching strategies and then observe the teacher in the classroom to give helpful feedback. Administrators must focus on encouraging teaching that incorporates a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students in a school.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.4: To help the teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance standards.

To help all teachers, school principals must observe what strategies the teachers are currently using, suggest new strategies for them to use, and encourage sharing of ideas at staff meetings. In meetings, the staff needs to research and discuss best practices to help all teachers succeed in meeting the needs of students. The principal must promote the use of various strategies in education.

One way the principal candidate helped teachers to understand and use of a variety of instructional strategies was by sharing personal teaching experience during staff meetings. When teachers share experiences they are able to relate to one another and use these new strategies in the classroom. By sharing writing examples and data teachers can analyze and reflect on the improvements students have made throughout the year.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.5: the teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behaviors to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

It is important for an administrator to understand the role of behavior management plans across a school. When the whole school uses the same plan, positive interactions can be reinforced on a daily basis. At Northside Elementary School, each classroom has a behavior and responsibility plan called the clip system. The clip system provides active engagement in the students' behaviors so that the students are able to see how the clip reflects their behavior. Individual clips show students how they are doing and can help build personal goals for the students. Documentation is also a crucial role in making this work in a classroom because a teacher has written evidence of what a student is doing. This evidence can help a principal support a teacher who is having an issue with a parent or student.

It is important to have a behavior management plan in a school. An individual behavior management plan helps families discuss with their child how their day was, what went well, what didn't, and what the student can do next time to meet expectations. As Rick Smith's book *Conscious Classroom Management* states, when good behavior is reinforced students are encouraged to use the correct behavior. (Smith, 2004)

As an aspiring administrator, this experience using a behavior management plan during the practicum demonstrated the importance of having a school wide management plan that works, and stressed the importance of communicating this plan with families. This behavior plan helps to provide rewards and consequences both intrinsically and extrinsically for students. Continuing to use behavior plans such as this will help to make expectations clear, build a positive school climate, engage students in correct behavior and allows strong administrator support for teachers.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.6: The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Classroom communication is a vital part of an effective classroom. Class communication can improve student learning, increase parental involvement and enhance collaboration among students, teachers, and administrators. In a similar manner, a principal will need to have communication with families, staff and students on a daily basis. Staff meetings or small group committees allow the building principal to know the staff and to learn the issues on specific topics. A school website allows principals to keep families and community members involved in what is happening at the school. Non-verbal signals in a school can also be effective in communicating the desired behavior. A principal would want to encourage nonverbal signals for the school to use to catch student's attention. For example, the same signal can be used when it is time to leave the cafeteria or when it is time for the entire school to be quiet for a message or presentation.

It is important for administrators to have excellent communication skills with staff members, parents and students, and there are a variety of communication avenues that can be employed. One way to do this is through a staff meeting for the teachers and classroom meetings

for the students. This type of meeting provides staff and students the opportunity to talk about issues, and concerns that are occurring in the school. An effective meeting allows all to have a voice and share their ideas. It is also necessary for the school to have time to build community and reinforce appropriate behavior. Principals know the benefits of having open communication with staff and students. Note taking is a good way to keep track of what was discussed in a meeting. The principal can then review the communications and examine what might need to be addressed again. Newsletters also keep parents informed and engaged in the classroom. An administrator will also need to talk with teachers regularly about classroom expectations, issues, concerns and behaviors. By talking with teachers about these expectations teachers will be better prepared for teaching students.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.7: the teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

The administrative candidate plans to facilitate the growth of teachers through the experience of developing lesson plans. The principal candidate has experience developing weekly reading lesson plans on a Smart Notebook that includes the use of reading comprehension, fluency, phonics, vocabulary, and writing. This experience of developing and implementing lesson plans will help the administrative candidate with evaluation and the development of teacher growth and preparation.

During this activity, the candidate analyzed the subject matter that must be covered. The candidate then thought about the best way to teach the lesson evaluating what could be done to increase student learning. After deciding on how a lesson would be introduced to students, then differentiation was considered. The candidate then thought about how to best engage and assess the student's understanding. Going through this detailed process would help guide instruction on

a daily basis. Because of this thorough experience with developing plans, the administrative candidate will be better prepared to help teachers develop lesson plans. During an evaluation, the administrator will know the components of effective student engagement and student learning and be able to look for examples in teacher's lessons.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-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 learner.

The administrative candidate plans to facilitate the growth of teachers in the use of a data to improve instructors. The reading assessment notebook is used when completing reading conferences and guided reading with students. An assessment notebook keeps track of students' ability and progress. When an assessment notebook is used, the teacher can look back on what the student has been reading, how the child is doing in the response notebook and what strategies have helped the child to become a better reader. In teaching, there are patterns of success; students sometime improve and then regress. By keeping an assessment notebook, a teacher will have a better idea of what the student is capable of and what teaching strategies they have implemented to help the student be successful.

Data driven decisions are very important to the administrator in leading a district to improved student achievement. The candidate will know be better prepared to help struggling teachers through positive feedback and discussions. In observations the administrator will be able to recognize what types of assessment the teacher is using, suggest ways the teacher can improve and even help develop assessment strategies with the teacher. One of the suggestions might be an assessment notebook to help keep track of student's progress in reading.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.9: the teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on other (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunity to grow professionally.

The data meetings that occur at Northside Elementary School each month with administration and teachers develop collaboration and reflection. The group uses a planning page for each data meeting. The team discusses the data that they have collected; how well students have done, and sets in motion a plan to improve learning. These meetings allow for everyone to evaluate how students are doing and what is being done to improve student learning. This experience will help the administration candidate develop skills to reflect with the teachers and other staff at the school through the use of data to analyze student growth and achievement.

The importance of reflection is demonstrated in these meetings and data analysis. An aspiring administrator can model open reflective leadership and show the importance of using data as best practice to improve instruction. A principal should include regular data review into the school year, and model being a reflective educator.

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 1.10: the teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and wellbeing.

The aspiring administrator will support teachers in fostering relationships with school colleagues, parents and agencies through his or her experience with collaboration. Each week during collaboration, the fourth grade team at Northside Elementary meets to discuss students learning and best practices. The collaboration meetings provide opportunity for the team to discuss best practices for teaching and student learning. The teachers utilize this time to discuss activities the group would like to do with classes. The team also uses this time to make connections with parents and community members through the planning of activities and field

trips. Collaboration time allows the opportunity for the teachers to talk about issues and plan to improve lessons for students. The teachers discuss ways to best serve the students and how the team can involve the Monroe community.

The administrator now knows that because of the collaboration meetings, teachers become part of a team. It is important to have a distinct time and agenda to ensure successful collaboration. Having time in the week to talk with team members provides time for teachers to collaborate on student achievement and best practices. An aspiring administrator needs to understand and communicate to teachers that common planning time is essential for quality collaboration. If teachers are unsure of how collaboration works, the principal can help them through the process because of previous personal experience with collaboration.

Chapter III

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-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.

The aspiring administrator was able to learn how to facilitate the development and implementation of a shared initiative through the experience of the simulated staff presentation. The simulated staff presentation and meeting that was presented, contained clear data about a specific problem, gained input from the staff, and facilitated a lesson on how to implement and use Independent Investigation Methods (IIM) in classrooms. This experience demonstrates an ability to facilitate the development of a vision by applying the data provided in class to implement a new vision in a school. The group utilized WKCE to ascertain the problems in school and then develop possible solutions. The problem was low language arts scores and the solution was to implement Independent Investigation Methods (IIM) in a school.

The power point presentation provided clear, detailed information on IIM; as well as, a step-by-step process for using IIM in the classroom. The presentation also illustrated improved language arts scores in schools that have implemented this type of research. By doing this project, the team was able to articulate the success of this research process to build a shared vision for the school.

Through this process of developing a project and presenting it to the UW-Platteville cohort, the candidate learned the importance of using data to support new initiatives in a school. The aspiring administrator also learned the importance of presenting a vision in a clear, concise, and engaging way to build acceptance for a new initiative. As an administrator, it is important to have a clear vision to improve student success. It is also important to work as a team, gain

everyone's input and work together throughout the whole process. By doing this, the faculty, staff, and administrator will work together be more involved in the process and feel a sense of belonging in the decisions that are made in the group.

CHAPTER IV

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-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 administrative candidate advocated and nurtured the school culture through the experience managing books clubs. In the 2009-2010 school year, Northside Elementary had two different book clubs. One was on *Conscious Classroom Management* by Rick Smith and the other was *The Daily 5* by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser. Several colleagues and the administrator joined together each week for a discussion on each book, working through the chapters. The group leader of this book club advocated for the processes and best practices that these two books included.

Rick Smith's book provides clear examples of why teaching classroom procedures is crucial to student success. These procedures included nonverbal cues for students, developing signals for a whole school, and teachers modeling for students. The teachers and administrator spent much time discussing what this meant. The group also shared experiences using some of Rick Smith's ideas. After reading this book, the group understood the importance of having classrooms where students know the routines and feel safe and welcomed in order to ensure student success. Administrators and teachers need to work together to provide best practice. To improve education it is crucial that we as administrators share experiences and discuss best practices with the classroom teachers in the building.

While studying the *Daily 5*, the group discussed how to improve reading instruction. This book gave clear examples of how to teach students to work independently. Throughout this reading, the leaders helped to nurture other teachers while the staff used the new reading plan.

Leading the book club provided the administrative candidate the opportunity to help enact reading *The Daily Five*. Professional growth is essential to successful change in staff development. Leading *The Daily 5* book club helped the administrative candidate to understand the importance of reading professional development books to stay up to date with the best practices in the subjects and the importance of involving teachers in ongoing professional development.

Chapter V

Wisconsin Standards for Administration Standard 4: the administrator ensures management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment by showing my understanding of school finance and operations of title funds.

Administrators can demonstrate knowledge of management of an organization's, operations, finances, and resources through completing a simulated consolidated plan. The simulated consolidated plan for a school district includes performance goals, a budget summary, and completed PI-1086. The development of the simulated plan also included presenting to a school board, showing how low language arts scores were in the school; the group then presented on how the team would improve language arts scores by integrating reading and writing into all subject areas. One way the team was going to accomplish this goal was by implementing Independent Investigation Methods (IIM) throughout the whole district. The team also determined the cost to support this initiative and how shared title funds would be redistributed to meet the new goal of increased student scores in language arts.

In this activity, the principal candidate, with the help of the group, decided upon what goals should be addressed and then determined which title funds should be re-allocated to which programs. This class simulation enhanced the candidate's understanding of how federal dollars are allocated in a school environment. Understanding this helped to organize a school budget to use all funds in a thoughtful and economical way. The candidate then used the budget summary and performance goal chart to show how the project would be implemented. The administrative candidate and the team members recommended the Independent Investigation Methods (IIM) project be implemented in the district to improve language arts scores. In the presentations, the school board was shown how IIM has improved language arts in others school. The power point presentation by showing the board members how the administrators would evaluate the program

once implemented. Overall, this consolidated plan and school board presentation provided an understanding of school financing.

Through this experience, the principal candidate learned that school organization, operation, and finance are intertwined with the school as a larger part of the community and state. Federal dollars need to be used in specific ways that document that students are learning. With title dollars, a specific goal is attached to that fund and it must be used for that purpose. Without this experience, the candidate would not have learned about budgeting and title money.

This consolidated plan also taught the candidate how to present to a school board in a professional way. The group presented how Independent Investigation Methods would improve language arts scores. Using graphs and data to show results is very important in gaining support. Completing this activity the candidate was more confident in establishing budgeting and performance goals in a school district.

Chapter VI

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 5: the administrator models collaboration with families and community member responding to diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community services.

The Costa Rican Teacher Exchange Program with the School District of Monroe occurred in January of 2010. Twelve teachers from Costa Rica traveled to Monroe, Wisconsin to learn about the educational work of the Monroe School District. In September, a group of ten educators from across the district began planning for the Costa Rican teacher's arrival. Over the course of several months, the group shared different leadership roles to help ensure that this exchange was successful. The principal candidate took on several different leadership roles. A crucial role was getting the cultural information about Costa Ricans to teachers in the buildings. One way the candidate did this was by planning a day for the Costa Rican teachers to have discussions with the students and staff in the building. The candidate also set up several cultural exchanges at local churches and host homes to share interests. Community members were invited to join the teachers and host families. This time was spent getting to know one another, and sharing and exchanging information.

The Costa Rican exchange program shows direct involvement with local and global communities. During the Costa Rican Teacher Exchange program, educators collaborated with each other discussing ways to involve the community. The leadership role in this experience helped the aspiring administrator gain experience working with local organizations to involve community members in these cultural experiences. From this experience, the candidate became better prepared to collaborate with a group to ensure planned success and mobilize a community through involvement.

As a future administrator, this teacher exchange program helps a principal to better understand the community and the world. Ensuring community involvement in school, a principal must make connections with the local businesses and organizations that support the district. This exchange program helped to make teachers and community member excited about the world. This is a crucial step when implementing something new in a district. It is important for staff be involved in the local community and to broaden horizons and learn about other cultures of the world.

Chapter VII

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 6: The administrator acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

On April 5th, 2011 the Monroe community voted on a referendum. To provide the necessary information to the community, a group of teachers and administrators developed several ways to present this information to community members. During a referendum, a school is asking the community for money to continue quality education for the students of that community.

From this experience, it is important for an administrator to remember to work ethically to develop new initiatives that better the school and community. One way to demonstrate fairness is to work collectively with a team, consistency of members from school and community ensuring that new initiatives are developed in a fair and ethical way because all parties were represented.

Chapter VIII

Wisconsin Standards for Administration-Standard 7: the administrator understands, responds to, and interacts with the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context that affects schooling.

Over the past two years, the School District of Monroe has been working with a committee of K-12 teachers and administrators to implement new grading and assessment procedures for the district. The group knew this would be time-intensive, involving much professional development and discussions with staff. In large group, there were discussions about elementary grading, reporting as well as input on current and future high school grading policies. Part of the committee led professional development on formative and summative assessments and current grading policies. Currently, the committee is working on deciding grading policies and implementing a new report card that has separate effort and achievement grades.

As a future administrator, this work on the grading and assessment committee will be extremely helpful because it shows how political, social, economic, legal and cultural changes in a school must take place. It also helps show the need for proper professional development, for encouragement of the staff to be part of the new initiatives and to include the legal and cultural affects of schooling in decisions. This committee also helped increase collaboration with middle and high school teachers related to grading and assessment policies. Grading policies are very different than the elementary school. A future principal must be aware of how the different levels of schooling affect each other. The principal must know that when a child leaves the elementary school, he or she must be prepared for the next level of education. The principal must ensure that teachers are preparing the students for the future, from middle to high school, and to college or the work place.

Summary

In summary, the experiences helped to develop an aspiring administrator into a successful educational leader. With a variety of experiences a principal can become prepared for the role of leader. If a future principal wishes to be successful the candidate must look at the seven administration standards and work to complete experiences that will successfully prepare the aspiring administrator to communicate with others, initiate ideas and learn to work with others.

Chapter X: Conclusion

The preceding standards reflect development as an administrator. The experiences are representations of the administrator's abilities as an educator. Through the course work, practicum hours and experience in leadership to improve as an aspiring administrator. The educational administration program at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville has also helped to develop into a person who is prepared for the role of principal in a school. The discussions and course work has increased the knowledge of the administrative candidate in education especially leadership roles. It has helped to form a clear vision for a school, one in which all students are learning and succeeding, as well as develop skills such as communication, collaboration, and management that will help develop these skills.

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