

BUILDING THE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION PORTFOLIO

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Abstract

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The University of Wisconsin-Platteville Education Administration Certification Program provides educators the opportunities and education necessary to develop an administrative portfolio which aligns with the Wisconsin Administrative Standards. This portfolio demonstrates the potential administrative candidate's abilities to compete in a technology-rich, quickly changing, political, tough economic educational system. Using technology, various educational literature, conferences, real-life scenarios, practicum hours, past and present administrators as instructors, reflection, and discussion, students in the cohort program expand their knowledge in current educational trends and can demonstrate knowledge and competencies in their administrative portfolios (UW-Platteville, 2011).

While participating in this two year cohort program, students meet and foster friendships with a variety of educators, counselors, other professionals and administrators which will be great resources in the future. Discussing and reflecting on real-life scenarios that occur in schools and hearing the opinions of educators with different expertise and knowledge help to broaden paradigms. Administrators address a myriad of topics such as; public relations, classroom management, special education services, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs, scheduling, budgeting, time management, policies, legal issues, response to intervention, positive behavior intervention and supports, discipline, attendance, technology, professional learning communities, staffing and unions, and current trends in education. Through this program and

working with two administrative mentors provides opportunities to gain working knowledge and experience with these types of topics through practicum hours in the Boscobel School District and a current position as a Dean of Students at Prairie du Chien High School (UW-Platteville, 2011).

The Education Administrative Certification Program provides students the tools necessary to develop artifacts that demonstrate knowledge and experiences in accordance to the ten Wisconsin Department of Instruction Teacher Standards and the Wisconsin Department of Instruction seven Administrative Standards. According to the guidelines specific competencies must be met, “The principal license is required for a person to serve as a principal or an assistant principal in an elementary, middle, or secondary level school. Specific competencies for the principal license determined by the state superintendent based on recommendations made by the professional standards council under s. 115.435 – Wisconsin Content Guidelines for Principal” (Wisconsin DPI, March 2010). The following pages will identify and define the Wisconsin Administrative Standards and demonstrate competencies in these standards through the use of artifacts and reflections created during practicum hours and professional experiences as a teacher and Dean of Students.

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Chapter I

Introduction

How does a band director gain the tools and understanding necessary to become an educational leader? What types of knowledge does the teacher already have that can be helpful in becoming an educational leader within a school? This paper will demonstrate ways an affective teacher gains and uses current administrator tools as an educational leader through the requirement of practicum hour experience and classroom experiences obtained during the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Education Administrative Certification Program (UW Platteville, 2011). These practicum hours, in addition to the application of teaching experiences during this two year program, help students develop an administrative portfolio based on the Wisconsin Department of Instruction Administrative Standards. The creation and reflection of current administrative portfolio artifacts and the practicum hours in the administrative field during the program create the change of paradigms held by a band director to the ideals of an administrative educational leader.

Statement of the Problem

Experience as a veteran ten year band director and the transition into a Dean of Students position for the Prairie du Chien School District provides the opportunity to apply teaching and administrative skills while gaining administrative tools in the Education Administration Certification Program. These experiences provide an opportunity to practice effective leadership under skilled administrative mentors. The Wisconsin Department of Instruction Administrative Standards influences these experiences and guide mentors to create experiences and artifacts that demonstrate the principal candidate's ability to be an effective educational leader.

The new role as Dean of Students provides the future administrator everyday administrative experiences. This position requires a solid knowledge of administrative duties and challenges. The opportunity to work with many mentors as a teacher and dean of students provides the principal candidate with different administrative styles and understanding of both the teaching and administrative roles. This provides substantial growth for the educational leader.

Identifying which administrative tools the principal candidate gains through teaching and the dean of students roles that apply to the administrative standards will be the problem this document addresses. This paper will apply and align reflections to the seven administrative standards that are part of the principal candidate's portfolio created during the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Education Administrative Certification Program (UW Platteville, 2011).

Methods and Procedures

Throughout this study different techniques in teaching and administration are observed. Use of the techniques are practiced and applied to research literature. Review of literature and knowledge of current concepts and educational trends are observed. Current programs and their application is described to further develop concepts and demonstrate awareness of current programs and training to develop students and staff by the principal candidate.

Chapter II

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1

“The administrator has an understanding of and demonstrates competence in the Ten Teacher Standards.” (Wisconsin Department of Instruction Educator Standards)

As an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, students work to create portfolios that align with the ten teacher standards. During a teaching career, students change and add to this portfolio to show development in teaching skills and employability. This experience helps teachers earn a Bachelor’s degree in education and a teaching license given by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Following graduation, the education portfolio becomes a living document that a teacher can use to show growth in the areas of teaching, coaching, and classroom leadership. As a band director in the Oshkosh Area School District, Boscobel School District and Dean of Students at Prairie du Chien High School these experiences have helped form a solid foundation as an educator and educational leader.

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 students.” (Wisconsin Department of Instruction Educator Standards)

Administrators value content and curriculum as tools that teachers use to guide student learning. It is important that teachers utilize the tools that best fit their subject area and provide the maximum opportunities for student learning. Educational leaders guide teachers in the application of educational standards to curriculum content. Administrators use scheduling and training to promote a setting of teacher collaboration and curriculum alignment. This provides

even distribution of the content and allows sharing of ideas to provide the best impact to students. Administrators also recognize the importance of classroom extension through the use of trips and activities to further enhance student learning.

As a band instructor, there are many tools to create meaningful learning experiences for the students, such as music selection. The instructor must be careful to select music that intrigues and challenges the student yet is pleasing for a parent audience. It is important to select music that reinforces central concepts and builds those concepts to continue the spiraling of knowledge. In all disciplines, curriculum is the basis and compass for the teacher to guide student learning. Administrators value a teacher's ability to be an expert in their curricular focus. Effective administrators use teacher input, curriculum data, trends, and teacher professional growth to help the teacher foster a vision of effective and meaningful curriculum content for their discipline.

In addition to using teacher expertise, administrators plan with teaching staff cross-curricular field trips and educational opportunities to enhance student learning. An example of this was evident in planning a Washington D.C. trip for the Boscobel High School Band. Students observed many of the artifacts they studied in history, saw musicals and plays with professional casts, budgeted spending money, and performed music in new cities with new audiences. Administration must work with the teachers to provide support for fundraisers and assist with presenting and approving trips through the school board. Planning for such a large and expensive trip requires organization, multiple teaching staff, and the administrator.

Content in the curriculum, collaboration and the extension through field experiences is imperative to creating a viable curriculum that enhances student achievement. As administrators, knowledge from research and data proves that solid curriculum has the highest impact on student

achievement among school level factors, and administrators and teachers must continue to work together to create and improve curriculum to raise student achievement.

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.2

“The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.”

(Wisconsin Department of Instruction, Educator Standards 2011)

Administrators must identify students’ and teachers’ strengths and weaknesses to create the best scheduling combinations for students and teachers. In larger schools, administrators have more teachers with the same certifications but different strengths. Some teachers work well with larger groups. These teachers use learning communities and a team problem-based approach teaching style and often excel in general core academics. Other teachers are very advanced in knowledge or work well one on one or with smaller groups of at-risk students. An administrator who effectively assesses student needs and matches the needs with teacher strengths will have a valuable tool in helping to increase student achievement.

Educational leaders can also provide diverse educational settings with creative use of scheduling and course offerings. Advance placement classes, basic core classes, guided study halls and small group options are examples of creative schedule use that often provide smaller class sizes and more individual student instruction. Administrators evaluate teacher strengths when choosing which classes a teacher will teach. Teacher scheduling is a tool the administrator uses to create schedules that matches teacher strengths with curricular needs.

Administrators also need to assess, evaluate, and provide educational opportunities for teachers and students to continue with their educational growth. Finding new and innovative practices and sharing practices with staff help to develop and further staff growth. Providing

opportunities for collaboration and idea sharing within the building will also foster ideas and innovation. Teacher collaboration can also be used to discuss student progress or concerns and interventions that can be used to enhance individual learning.

Using data from student assessment and sharing that data with staff will help identify strengths and weaknesses. Feedback, in the form of evaluation of teachers, with data can help teachers identify teaching strengths and weaknesses. As an administrator, meeting with parents, students, and staff to identify data and reveal strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning can provide insight into understanding what opportunities need to develop to support student learning.

In addition to academic learning, administrators facilitate social and developmental learning by supporting student extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. Administrators recognize demographical needs and create or support effective programs to supplement student learning. Promoting programs and hiring quality coaches that connect with students are just a few of the many ways the administrator supports extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. Effective coaches and activities teach teamwork, reliability, dedication, commitment, and interpersonal skills creating an atmosphere of developmental and social learning supported by the educational leader.

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.3

“The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.” (Wisconsin Department of Instruction, Educator Standards, 2011)

Students in classrooms vary in abilities, talent, devotion, social skills and personalities. Teachers often need to adapt lessons to fit the needs of the students within the classroom.

Educational leaders listen to teachers and students needs to understand how student learning differs and adapt the building and staff to fit those needs.

Administrators need to be aware of the different resources available and the needs of students to help teachers adapt curriculum to the learner. Finding resources that best fit student learning and facilitating the implementation of those resources with teaching staff creates instructional opportunities that adapt to the needs of the diverse learners.

An example of administrative involvement in curriculum adaptation is found in Response to Intervention, or RTI. Administrators must be aware and have three progressive steps in the curriculum to help a child be successful in regular education before a special education referral can be made. Some of the adaptive curriculums used in the Prairie du Chien school district are Read 180 for students struggling in reading or computer programs such as Compass learning for credit recovery. The administrator decides which programs to implement through researching student data. After careful analysis, the administrator facilitates and supports teacher training of the new curriculum. Using student data, the administrator evaluates the curriculum effectiveness and the individual student progress. If the student continues to not show improvement in benchmark standards, the administrator chooses different curriculum and strategies until three interventions have been tried. A special education referral is completed for that student and the administrator continues to make adaptations in scheduling for that student according to an Individual Education Plan.

In summary, administrators evaluate student data and needs to find the best curricular options for raising student achievement. Administrators implement school-wide curriculum based on data and needs, and then facilitates training for teachers to meet the needs of the diverse learner.

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.4

“The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance standards.”

Being aware of a variety of instructional tools and resources is important for the administrator. Administrators need to lead teachers in new innovations for their classrooms. An effective educational leader understands teaching standards and researches a variety of new ideas in education to share with staff. In addition, administrators must find ways in scheduling to provide teachers time to share new ideas and trends creating a collaborative teaching environment.

Administrators look for ways through the use of scheduling to provide opportunities to challenge students of all abilities. Providing advance placement (AP) opportunities at the high school level and gifted and talented programs will challenge students and provide opportunities for students to earn credits for college. Administrators must use scheduling to create ways to challenge diverse learners. Placing diverse learners in regular classroom with supports from a special education teacher or aide is one example of how an administrator finds opportunities using teacher schedules to challenge students of all abilities.

Administrators must also have knowledge in interpreting and understanding performance standards for each discipline. Using performance based standards such as the National Core Standards, administrators guide staff to create curriculum and student assessment that aligns to standards. Administrators facilitate collaboration and lead discussions with teaching staff to assess and close gaps between standards and current curriculum instruction. Having knowledge in standards, administrators encourage teachers to use performance standards in teaching.

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 1.5

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

“The combination of who we are and what we do makes for effective classroom management” (Rick Smith, *Conscious Classroom Management*, 2006). A teacher must understand individual strengths and weaknesses in addition to practices to determine what types of classroom management will work. Attending workshops such as Rick Smith’s “Conscious Classroom Management” workshop can help a teacher discover personality strengths and weaknesses in creating structure and routines in the classroom. Rick Smith reiterates the importance of ritual and routines several times in his book and workshop. Administrators recognize that teacher’s with routines for students have less interruptions and a better flow to their classroom. It is essential that administrators look for effective management techniques when evaluating staff and provide staff workshops like Rick Smith’s to help gain expertise in working with student behaviors.

Administrators also look for ways to reinforce positive behaviors and discourage negative behaviors in the classroom. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are strategies that reward students for positive behaviors in the classroom. A teacher or administrator creates incentive activities that students can participate in if they meet certain building or classroom expectations. One of the interventions provided at Prairie du Chien High School is the After Hours program. This program allows students to stay after school and work in a small group with a teacher to make sure assignments are understood and completed. As a reward, students who complete assignments and raise their grades to passing are eligible to leave campus during

the lunch period. This reinforces the positive behavior of completing assignments while also providing an intervention and support to achieve an academic goal.

School wide, classroom, and individual interventions are tools that the Oshkosh, Boscobel, and Prairie du Chien school districts utilize. Administrators often lead these interventions with support and ideas from the staff. As an instructional leader, the administrator provides resources and ideas for teachers to create an effective learning climate in their classroom.

Wisconsin Administrative 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.”

Administrators must provide teachers ways to effectively communicate with staff, parents, and students. Email and other computer communication programs allow parents to talk to teachers at their convenience and see grades or lessons students may not have completed. The communication between teachers, parents and students through the use of internet has become vital in school communication. Skyward, email, and other useful computer programs have been developed to aid in this communication but administrators must decide which program to use, when to train staff, and who will have access to different information.

Staff meetings are another important tool administrators use to communicate with staff. Meetings with the staff allow time for staff collaboration and the sharing of ideas, and also inform staff of upcoming events. These meetings also give staff the opportunity to share feedback or concerns and they can be a forum for staff development. Book discussions, new

classroom technology items, and data review are just a few of the many ways administrators can communicate with staff.

Administrators must promote their school and student achievements in the community through active communication. Communities provide funding for schools within the local tax levy, and it is important that schools inform the community of the things that are occurring. It is also important to have effective communication with parents on student achievement through use of media. Presentations of school achievement data to public school board meetings and placing a link to the Wisconsin DPI webpage data on school achievement are just a few of the ways schools can communicate student achievement to parents at a school wide level. As an administrator, it is also important to be able to communicate expectations with staff, students, and parents. At Prairie du Chien High School, verbal and written communication through the website, newspaper, email, staff meetings, parent teacher conferences, contracts, and many other means is crucial for understanding expectations and direction within the school and community.

Wisconsin Administrative Standard 1.7

“The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of the subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.”

As an administrator, it is important to plan instruction at the building level and provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate to create timelines for implementing curriculum. This should prevent redundancy between grade levels and ensure that all of the material necessary for students to learn is taught. Boscobel and Prairie du Chien High administrators schedule meetings and in-services to help teachers understand standards-based curriculum and integrated lessons. Attempts are made by administration to schedule common preps within core subject

areas so that teachers are able to meet and form common assessments, align curriculum, and discuss how to enhance student achievement.

Understanding and assessing community needs and demographics is a valuable tool administrators also use to evaluate curriculum goals for students. Evaluating the needs of the community workforce, educational standards, and students' abilities guides the administrator as the curriculum leader. The curriculum leader assesses all of these needs and guides the teaching staff to fulfill the needs.

Wisconsin Administrative Standard 1.8

“The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure that continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.”

An administrator must use data to make determinations and assess student achievement within the school. Maps testing, the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concept Exam (WKCE), and the American College Test (ACT) are just a few of the common assessments Wisconsin administrators are using in the Prairie du Chien School District. Being able to interpret and share the data from these tests and talk about how it relates to the student is an important administrative tool. The information from these tests can help administrators better understand student's abilities and evaluate student programming. Prairie du Chien administrators and guidance counselors meet with every student and parent each year to look at the data from these tests and to evaluate positives and gaps in the child's education. With this knowledge, the administration can adapt schedules and programming to best serve the needs of the students through response to intervention techniques such as Read180 and Compass Learning.

Administrators also collaborate with staff to form grading policies to assess student achievement in the classroom on a regular basis. Grading policies provide consistent guidelines

throughout the school for teaching staff to follow. Turning in late assignments and assessing participation points are a few of the policies put in place to provide consistency among the teaching staff. It is important that the administrator collaborates with staff on student assessment to create staff support so that a consistent grade assessment practice for every student school wide is followed.

Wisconsin Administrative 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 opportunities to grow professionally.”

As an educational leader, it is important to demonstrate and encourage reflection with staff and students. Evaluating and meeting with staff on a regular basis to discuss teaching practices is one way an administrator encourages reflection. Administrators may provide presenters for the teaching staff to speak on topics to provide thought and reflection. As an administrator, it is important to encourage and demonstrate reflection. Providing the opportunity for staff to seek and share professional development opportunities, and discuss personal growth and reflection with the staff are ways the administrator can demonstrate and encourage reflection.

Wisconsin Administrative Standard 1.10

“The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students’ learning and well-being.”

Administrators recognize that students may have challenges at home and share these concerns with teachers. These situations may require the administrator to provide teacher support and share information with outside agencies such as social services to ensure students get the

help they need at home so they can focus on school. Administrators need to develop relationships and become familiar with outside agencies such as law enforcement and social services to provide help and support for students outside of the school day.

It is important for administrators to have good relationships with each other, parents, guidance counselors, and teachers so that effective and helpful communication can take place to help students. Networking with other administrators provides the sharing of ideas that work for students. Making regular attempts to communicate with parents and staff help build and foster a sense of community for the administrator, teacher and students.

Administrators must collaborate with staff and parents to create and implement the mission of the school. Staff should be aware of the administrators vision and be given the opportunity to share ideas for that vision. Creativity and collaboration with staff and parents will create ingenuity and a school mission that fits the school demographics and help students achieve at fullest potential.

Chapter III

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.”

Currently at Prairie du Chien High School the staff is looking at changing the current grading policy into a policy that will more clearly define academic ability and behavior as separate entities. The vision of learning that is shared by staff and administration is the current system of student assessment does not adequately depict the students learning. As an administrator, it is important to lead the staff dialogue and create opportunities for staff to meet and discuss the topic.

Often compromise must occur in policy change and it is important as the educational leader to find and recommend the compromises to staff. Clear articulation and concise communication is very important when proposing ideas and compromises. Restating comments in meetings to assure clarity among staff members is a tool an administrator uses in aiding discussion and leading compromise.

As an educational leader, it is important to guide discussion to help staff collaborate and create the goal or vision. In the grading policy discussion at Prairie du Chien, it is challenging because teachers have different beliefs in regards to grading and a strong sense of ownership to grading based on personal bias. According to Stephen Friedman, “Teachers tend to find a way to have their grading policy reflect their own deeply held beliefs (not necessarily knowledge) about how students should be graded, even if building or district-level grading policies exist. Often, this is a reflection of how their own teachers graded them and is characterized by a strong sense of ownership.” (middleweb.com). It is important as an administrator, to create a non-

threatening environment when encouraging these difficult conversations among staff and guide discussion into outcomes. These conversations can often lead to disagreement so it is important that the administrator guide the staff into compromise. Stephen Friedman comments that “Principals should not be too surprised if raising questions about grading practices evokes some fairly powerful reactions from teachers.” (middleweb.com). The ability to guide the discussion with good reflective questions and presentation of facts and statistics can help remove some of the emotion behind sensitive subjects such as grading and create open dialogue among staff.

Administrators also need to understand timelines in regards to which discussion to have with the school board at different times of the year. Changes to policies such as grading in the handbook need to be addressed by the school board in June for the upcoming school year. It is important for the administrator to gather data, create proposals for the school board to vote on, and discuss proposals prior to a vote with staff so that the administrator can advise the school board to vote on policy that will best represent the school’s needs.

Chapter IV

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.”

To advocate, nurture, and sustain a positive school culture, Prairie du Chien High School has created a Leadership Team which recently organized a Leadership Day. Leadership day had students participate in team building exercises and then placed in groups with students that they may not traditionally be grouped. The day was a great success and many students commented that they really enjoyed the opportunity to get to know and work with students they may not have contact with normally.

As another piece to building a collaborative school climate was a creation of the 9th hour. The 9th hour is an extra forty minutes added to the students’ school day that the students can use to get help from teachers in areas they need help. This time was also used by teachers to advise at-risk students that are assigned to them through the advisor/advisee program to check grades and social well-being. Teachers can also use the TRIBES concepts to build a sense of belonging and motivate students to participate in the classroom within the school day especially during the 9th hour period. The philosophy of TRIBES is “a systems approach to support positive human development” (Gibbs, 2001). It focuses on restructuring the whole school into a village with each student a contributing member.

Using and supporting leadership and classroom team initiatives with staff as an administrator will help to minimize distractions students may face in interpersonal relationships and allow student focus to be primarily on curriculum and classroom work. This fosters a collaborative and positive community based school culture.

Chapter V

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 4

“The administrator ensures management of the organization, operation, finances, and resources for a safer, efficient, and effective learning environment.”

Planning extra-curricular events requires organization and strong communication skills. Working as the assistant to the athletic director at Boscobel High School and as the Dean of Students at Prairie du Chien High School, managing and organizing officials and game workers is a daily task. There are also many scheduling, coordinating and fiscal responsibilities to ensure each function will have the proper support necessary to be successful.

Discipline is also important when managing school events. It is important that the administrator be at events to ensure the safety of the students, parents, and community members when attending events at the school. Administrators are expected to handle student discipline at events and remove unruly spectators. When necessary, an administrator may need to react quickly to address an emergency situation. It is important that an administrator communicates and works well with area agencies such as the police and fire departments to ensure a quick response in the event of an emergency.

Administrators also plan the school budget and find ways to manage the school as efficiently as possible without sacrificing student programs. The administrator must look for ways to save money while maintaining school programming using organization and effective communication with staff. Administrators need to be aware of staff needs and find ways to meet those needs. Encouraging staff to compare vendors when purchasing materials and setting aside extra funds for upcoming larger expenses are ways that administrators can provide staff materials while balancing the budget.

Chapter VI

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 5

“The administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources.”

Project Lead the Way (PLTW), is a national program that aligns with the national core standards and is currently implemented at Prairie du Chien High School due to area business seeking skilled workers trained in the engineering and medical fields. “The PLTW Innovation Zone (aka the classroom) is an engaging and thought-provoking place, where students develop critical thinking skills through hands-on project-based learning, preparing them to take on real-world challenges. Students will have the opportunity to create, design and build things like robots and cars, applying what they are learning in math and science to the world’s grand challenges” (PLTW.org, 2011). Currently, Prairie du Chien High School is implementing several of the engineering and bio-medical courses. Funding for these courses is provided by both the districts and area businesses 3M, Franciscan Skemp Clinic, Prairie Memorial Hospital, and Gundersen Lutheran Clinics. This is the first year that the program has been implemented at Prairie du Chien High School. Administration is working to organize teacher training and promote the program to the community. Administration is working with teachers to obtain accreditation and college credit for students enrolled in these courses. The Dean of Students facilitates and organizes opportunities with teachers to promote Project Lead the Way. A Project Lead the Way Fair for the community and students to participating in the STEMposium is the role the Dean of Students uses locally to promote Project Lead the Way.

As a Prairie du Chien administrator, securing donations and providing information to the community and schools touring the Project Lead the Way program is also part of promoting these classes for students. It is important for the Prairie du Chien administrators to collaborate with the community and inform parents of the opportunities that are being provided for their children.

Chapter VII

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 6

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

As an educational leader, there is a feeling of personal accountability for the success of every child. Expulsions are no exception. An administrator must be able to assess and evaluate the needs of students that fail to follow statutes or policies which may require removal from the school to protect the learning environment for the other students. These situations require appropriate documentation and understanding of students’ rights and state statutes. It is important for administrators to act in a fair and ethical manner when handling sensitive situations such as these.

Using the handbook, state statute, school board policies, along with good judgment helps the administrator address these difficult situations as fairly as possible. It is essential when dealing with discipline or attendance issues to educate the family and be very honest and open with information regarding the child but not the information of other students. Understanding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), is significant when dealing with sensitive student concerns.

The act states, “Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record”. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31): School officials with legitimate educational interest; Other schools to which a student is

transferring; Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes; Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student; Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school; Accrediting organizations; To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law” (US Department of Education, 2011). Determining expulsion hearings versus manifestation hearings requires knowledge of students and knowledge of whether or not a student qualifies for special education or has an underlying medical condition or 504 Plan. This information may not be directly found in a pupil’s records and may require an administrator to investigate to provide a proper hearing and allows the school administrator access to information to present to the school board to make a decision based on the school board policy.

Another example, in which FERPA helps the administrator, is when working with school policy and the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletics Association (WIAA). It may be necessary to use citations and court appearances to determine eligibility of athletes. Parents may not want schools to have access to information because it allows the schools to work with the court system to obtain court records and police reports to enforce consequences on school and athletic policies on behaviors that may occur off school property or after school hours. It is the administrator’s responsibility to practice confidentiality, understand FERPA, and work with agencies to share only information that enforces statutes, policies, and ultimately promote the well-being of the pupil.

Chapter VIII

Wisconsin Administrator Standard 7

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

As the attendance officer for the Prairie du Chien School District, many interactions are made with outside agencies to help students. The district holds approximately one hundred truancy meetings per year. During these meetings, representatives from the Crawford County Human Services Department, and law enforcement in addition to the parents, students and the school attendance officer are present at these meetings to address areas of concern in regards to attendance. During the truancy meeting, the attendance officer asks the student’s and parents’ questions to determine the cause for the student’s truancy. These questions are designed to evaluate if there are any of the following concerns: academic abilities or learning problems, curriculum challenges or grading pressure and difficulties with social interaction (Leading to Change/Improving Student Attendance, May 2008). At these meetings, a determination is made by the team if other services will be necessary to help the student and family.

Wisconsin state statute sets guidelines for attendance and the Prairie du Chien School Districts handbooks outline the board policies and procedures that correspond with the state statutes. Parents are notified by a certified letter within five days of the scheduled truancy meeting and are allowed five days to reschedule the meeting (Wisconsin State Statues 118, 2011). Principal candidates learn and apply Wisconsin State Statutes in the administrative legal course and the systems module courses at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. Using these

attendance statutes the district is able to hold truancy meetings that allow us to discuss issues the student may have and provide the appropriate services to alter curriculum, get the student to school, or look into the student's home situation.

As an administrator, these meetings have been very valuable and helpful in getting students' the individual services needed. This is a tool districts may overlook but can often provide information on the student's academic and home life. The parents of at-risk students tend to avoid coming to school for conferences and meetings but often attend truancy meetings since a fine or court referral can be assessed after the meeting when the student meets the criteria of truancy.

Chapter IX

Conclusion

Administrators need to have knowledge in a variety of areas to conduct day to day business and be pioneering educational leaders in their buildings. The University of Wisconsin Platteville Educational Administration Program encourages the development of the administrative leader through the legal information provided in the legal class and the systems classes. Students also apply knowledge to practicum hours that are done as on the job training in administrative positions or within schools through teaching experiences. These hours, in addition to the information provided by the program, align to the administrative standards and build administrative students portfolios that demonstrate growth, learning, and employability.

Experience in areas of teaching and administration provide potential principal candidates the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills used in the Educational Administration Program. These possibilities give the aspiring administrator working knowledge in current programs and trends in education. Practicum hours and quality classroom discussions in the Educational Administration Program give the candidate the ability to shift paradigms and view education as an educational leader.

Chapter X

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