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EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Preamble

In education, effective leadership comes from the administrator's conscious embodiment of a school's values as a role model for the school community. What we expect from others must first be evident in our own lives. Beyond example, administrators enable exceptional teaching, learning, and scholarship through tireless advocacy for the learning community – especially its youngest members, our students.

The learning community: collaborative, irregular, relational, and authentic

Effective administrators realize effective teachers do not always follow expected or predictable paths. Master teachers build learning opportunities as a master carpenter builds a house; as the mind is portable, so is the learning environment. Teaching methods differ as tools in a shop, yet carpenter and teacher produce outcomes both measurable and unique.

Characteristics of a collaborative learning community include shared expectations; habitual communication throughout an organization; communal interdependency; vigorous, passionate, and constructive dialogue; and the oddity that neither successes nor failures stand alone.

Disney's designers – the Imagineers – remind us, "Every sorcerer was once an apprentice." Apprentices must consistently fulfill duties with real, significant, and personal consequences – authentic responsibility – before gaining the power of mastery. Our students must enjoy (and perhaps endure) similar opportunities when possible – especially when opposed to 'when convenient.'

The 21st century school: embracing the information age

At the dawn of the 21st century, virtually any piece of information is accessible through tools also enabling near-instantaneous communication around the world. Today's efficiency of information transmission, storage, and retrieval is no temporary trend. Families – prospective, current, and alumni – may easily learn of our school from many places. How we listen, understand, and respond in a hyperconnected community will matter to our long-term success.

Sociologists indicate that our students will continue to hold jobs that do not yet exist, and will make many career changes in their lives. With those demands ahead, our students must gain a knack for self-education and habitual learning.

Especially in times of change, teachers remain an intervening force in our students' lives. Much of modern culture values easy things, instant gratification, and sloth of every kind save the pursuit of fleeting pleasures easily gained. We insist our students learn to deny themselves short-term amusement for long-term betterment. We insist that integrity matters. We insist that life-long curiosity and learning have value apart from financial gain. We insist the lessons of sustainability apply across political and cultural boundaries.

Community

Learning is inextricably related to relationships, which are to some degree attached to the frequency of intersections – that is to say, the amount of time spent together doing different things. If our words proclaim different values than our investments of time reveal, neither will impact our students' lives.

While traveling to a New World, John Winthrop explained community as distinctive only as long as love was a "familiar and constant practice" among its members. Many talk about love. As far as possible, I have sought to put love into practice. I know no other way to lead, and know no greater gift to offer a learning community.