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### Philosophy of Leadership

Based on my belief that every child is capable of success, I strive to ensure that all students receive the education they deserve. As an educator, I believe it is our school and community's responsibility to educate our students. For this to happen, I build relationships between the school, family, and community. Connecting the school, family, and community reflects my values as well. I value input not only from my colleagues, but from the families of and community members who work with our students. I value direct instruction from a teacher as much as I value teacher as a facilitator. The foundation for both of these lie in the fact that they provide rigor and meet the needs of students. They are opposite ends of the education spectrum in terms of delivery, but each are impactful in their own unique way. I trust teachers to know their students' needs and support their work. Educating students is multi-faceted. I recognize that relationships are the basis for ensuring our students' success.

Before I started college, I was convinced I would be an elementary school teacher. I worked at the YMCA with young children for this reason – my thought process was that if I struggled to work with young children for a few hours a day, how would I be able to teacher them for six hours a day? It was not until transferring to Meredith College my sophomore year and visiting the special education classrooms at my mom's school that I considered changing my major. I changed my major to Psychology and through my coursework there realized that I felt a calling to work with those with different-abilities. Every course I took brought me deeper into the complex mind of the human being and the even more complex accompanying behaviors. To think I could use the theories learned and apply them each day to students who needed to be

understood excited me. The more I learned, the more compelled I felt to work with students with disabilities. I never regretted this decision. Working with this population opened my eyes to certain injustices. This led me to my first graduate degree in Special Education. Today, it still guides me in my graduate work at North Carolina State University.

I have high expectations of myself. Not for any reason other than for the sake of our students. As a teacher, I always demanded of myself to be the best for them. As a school leader, my expectation is that I still do what is best. If I decide to go beyond a principalship, I know it will be because I am continuing the fight for students with disabilities. Another expectation is that I stay grounded and humble. I was once a first year teacher. I will also have high expectations of my staff. I do understand that the first few years of teaching are the most difficult so while my expectations of beginning teachers will be high, so will my grace. I believe holding high expectations of myself and being transparent about those expectations with my staff will encourage them to meet my expectations as well. With high expectations comes strong relationships. I cannot expect them to strive for success if there are not strong relationships at our school.

As with any school leader, there are certain non-negotiables, or factors and ideas that I cannot tolerate. For starters, disrespect. This is disrespect for staff members, students, community members, and families. I know that it is inevitable that some people will not work well together or some adults may not like each other, but we all will still respect each other. The other non-negotiable is attitude. Everyone is entitled to having a bad day, but consistent bad attitudes towards students and the teaching profession will not be tolerated. I never understood why some people stayed in the teaching profession if it made them so unhappy. And their unhappiness isolates them from others. While I cannot let people go necessarily because of their

attitude or disrespect, I can make it uncomfortable for them to work at our school or have the discussion with them to find where they might be better suited.

My philosophy of leadership stems from my past experiences, coursework, and personal beliefs. Each of these areas have a basis in relationship-building. I strive to make this a part of my leadership practice.