

Artifact Title: “Sea of Troubles”
Date Experienced: Fall, 2012

Artifact Description:

My artifacts are two pictures of the band room. One picture was taken when I first arrived at Clinton High School, and the second picture is after teaching in the district for over a year and a half. They are a representation of where I started and where I am now while writing this reflection. The transition into this position was a huge challenge to my integrity and will be the main theme of this reflection.

Wisconsin Administrator Standard Alignment:

This artifact best aligns with Administrative Standard 6 **Communications (ethical):** *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.*

This experience aligns best with standard 6 because it demonstrates ability to be ethical in the decision making process, subordinate one’s own interest to the good of the program, and accept consequences for upholding one’s principles and actions. My first year at Clinton presented unique challenges that required the consideration of Clinton band traditions in my decision making. I had to adjust some of my priorities and goals as a music educator to make the transition for my students more accommodating. Though I tried to be flexible, I did make mistakes. As the new leader of this program, I had to own the mistakes I made by reaffirming my beliefs and that any mistakes that were made were well intended.

The transition to Clinton High School demonstrates my competency in this standard because it required me to demonstrate values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspired others to higher levels of performance, consider the impact of my position on others, and to treat people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect. As the new director, I had to present my plan for the band program to try and prove to the students, staff, and community that I had a vision for what I wanted the program to be. I had to use my new position to collaborate with district administration as well as members of the community to establish priorities and implement plans to maintain the quality of the program while moving it forward. I also had to continuously treat students within the program with dignity and respect, despite them constantly challenging the decisions I made, almost daily.

What I learned about teaching/learning from this experience:

I have learned that in taking a new position or in taking on new duties, you are pulled in several different directions by many people. I had students who were in shock that a teacher who had been in the district for 43 years left abruptly in early August. I had members of the community, many of whom were former members, wanted the program to be as it was when they were in high school. And on top of those two huge factions, I had administration that feared for their jobs and were putting additional stress on me, to first maintain the status quo of the program, but to begin adjusting the priorities to fit their district goals and priorities. Taking this position was a huge balancing act and required me to constantly think about how I was presenting new ideas, while still being fair to all three groups. At times I found it difficult to act with integrity because I was frustrated often. Even though I struggled on a daily basis with these different groups, I realized that I was hired to do a job and I was the only one that could be the reason for keeping my job or getting fired. So, I came up with a set of beliefs I held as a band director and began making decisions based on those beliefs. These beliefs allowed me to be more confident in my decision making and has allowed for my second year at Clinton to be a colossal improvement over the first year.

What I learned about myself as a prospective administrator as a result of this experience/artifact:

As a teacher, I learned that my patience was tested often by students, parents, and administration while they were all trying to push their agendas on me. As an aspiring administrator, I feel very confident that this experience has given me an ability to see all groups and to treat them equitably. I know that if/when I become a principal, many “interest groups” will be pulling for my attention and be pushing their priorities on me. Now that I am in my second year at Clinton, I may have some inclinations of what a principal feels like during their first year in the position. To do a successful job, I will need to treat all interest groups with fairness and give them each the time they deserve. I can’t take sides, or play groups against each other because that creates more animosity and dissension, making it more difficult to get anything accomplished. I must also make all decisions in an ethical manner to ensure equity and lastly, I need to always act with integrity. If I am honest with all interest groups, they may be unhappy with decisions I make, but at least they will know they can trust me. Trust can go along way into building a high quality educational institution.