

Artifact Title: Professionalism
Date Experienced: November 11, 2013

Artifact Description:

My artifact is a transcription of the interview I conducted with Dr. Randy Refsland, Superintendent of the Clinton Community School District. During the interview, Dr. Refsland was asked varying questions about law in education and their influence on district policy. This interview was conducted as part of my Legal Aspects class.

Wisconsin Administrator Standard Alignment:

This artifact best aligns with Administrative Standard 7 **Professional Behavior**: *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.*

This experience aligns best with Standard 7 because it demonstrates an understanding of law as related to education and school. The interview allowed me to gain knowledge of how law influences every aspect of education from a veteran educator who spent many years in the classroom, as a principal, and as a superintendent. This discussion gave me insight into how as a leader, I can influence policies created within the district. An administrator must have an understanding of how policy can affect social and economic aspects of a community and school district.

This interview demonstrates competency because it allowed me to gain a perspective that I won't be able to attain until I become an administrator. Dr. Refsland's insight into how law affects our schools was invaluable to me as an aspiring administrator. I now have a better understanding of how schools work in alignment with local, state, and federal laws, and how each school operates in the best interest of the students and the community. An example is the recent changes with Act 10. The school district is following state law that limits negotiations with teacher unions to base salary. So, in accordance with state law, the district doesn't allow negotiations for anything else including health insurance for retirees. This has become a hot button issue recently in our district because of the change over from retired teachers health insurance paid for by the district to Health Savings Accounts. By law, the district is not negotiating with the teachers union and is making a financial change because the school board believes this will save money and is in the best interest of students. Although the district is following state law and not negotiating, they have agreed to listen to the teachers union out of respect and may take some of their suggestions. This is a prime example of following state law and acting in the best interest of students while also understanding the influence their decision will have on the social and economic aspects of a community and school district.

What I learned about teaching/learning from this experience:

I have learned that not all policies we have in the district are because of the administration or board who wrote them. Many policies stem from a mandate given by the state. As a teacher, I now have a better understanding of how federal and state laws affect my school district and the policies that are created. I have also learned that even though these mandates come from the state, the administration has the ability to put their own unique touch on all policies, which could be seen as good and bad. It is up to the administrator to create policies that meet state and federal law, but also take into account values which are important to school and community.

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

As a teacher, I learned that not all policy is a direct result of an administrator. Looking at this standard from the "goggles" of an administrator, I see the potential for being able to make meaningful changes to a school district. I also see how important it is for me as a potential administrator to understand the district I work in before making major changes to policy. I now understand how much those policies affect both a school district and a community. As a professional leader, it would be my job to not only make sure that those policies are in alignment with state mandates, but are also consistent with the values and priorities of community members, parents, and students within the school district.