



A Shared Vision of Exemplary Teaching

(Working Document)

For

Wild Rose Public Schools

Creating Powerful Learning Environments



Introductory Comments

1. Affirmations serve a key role in the Shared Vision of Exemplary Teaching. I have been using affirmations for several years in my personal and professional lives. (Thanks to Lou Tice and his “Investment in Excellence” Program.) Affirmations are positive statements that extend the present into the future toward realistic and achievable goals. In other words, they are a blueprint for growth and change. They may not be necessarily true at the time but have the possibility of becoming true. Affirmations say to the subconscious, “You are there already.” Our subconscious works to accept this and eventually it becomes a reality after frequent and repeated positive thinking. In the end, we act according to the positive belief and we have become what we aspired to.
2. The affirmations in this document are “we” statements and can easily be converted into “I” statements to make them more personal (see My Affirmations for Exemplary Teaching).
3. The affirmations must be re-visited on a regular basis (weekly at minimum) to ensure they are internalized.
4. I do not intend or expect the belief statements and affirmations in this document to be adopted by educators as their own. Instead, I hope they serve as a springboard to productive self-reflection and collective inquiry about teaching and learning by administrators and teachers. The beliefs, actions and affirmations are the result of 40-plus years of experience as a teacher, administrator and consultant in the Province of Alberta. During that time, I have observed, worked with, and learned from numerous exemplary teachers and administrators. I extend a sincere “Thank You” to all of them for inspiring me to draft this Shared Vision of Exemplary Teaching.
5. Mother Teresa once said, “Don’t look to do great things but rather look to do small things with great love”. To paraphrase her advice in the context of professional instructional practice, we might say, “Doing great things as a teacher is to consistently perform the fundamentals of teaching in an expert manner”. The Shared Vision of Exemplary Teaching is grounded in that premise, and therefore might be defined as “a description of the expert and consistent application of the fundamentals of instructional practice”.
6. Exemplary teaching is not about “tips, tricks and techniques”. It is about aligning actions with core beliefs about teaching and learning. It is about developing and implementing strategic approaches to building relationships and achieving intended learner outcomes. It is about combining strategy and structure with flexibility – i.e. being able to use a variety of teaching models ranging from teacher centered to student centered but always being curricula and learning centered. It is about connectedness—i.e. building bridges between curricula and the lives of students. Consequently, the Shared Vision of Exemplary Teaching that follows travels as a complete package.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>A Shared Vision of Exemplary Teaching</i> <i>Wild Rose Public Schools</i></p>

One of our goals in Wild Rose Public Schools is to develop a strong, identifiable and sustainable culture of outstanding leadership, exemplary teaching and excellence in learning, which we have defined as “the knowledge and beliefs relative to high-performance leadership, teaching and learning that are consistently and expertly put into practice by the entire staff of a school division, relative to respective roles, thereby creating opportunities for each student to achieve optimal learning”.

Here is the reason for that definition – our level of effectiveness is determined by how we choose to approach our day-to-day responsibilities as educators. We make those choices based on our belief system, or personal values. Our actions are therefore determined by our beliefs, and our actions determine the type of educators we become (i.e. Believing - Behaving - Becoming).

We further realize that culture is a group, not an individual phenomenon. If the actions of our staff as a whole consistently reflect a commonly-held belief system, then our schools have a strong, identifiable, and sustainable culture. When we have consistency and cohesion, we have culture. When we have culture, we succeed together!

Putting it all together, the culture of Wild Rose Public Schools is what we believe in, what we know, and what we do. For that reason, our staff has agreed on the following “shared vision of exemplary teaching” for our schools. The vision includes our collective, non-negotiable beliefs about teaching and learning, and the actions we undertake that are consistent with our beliefs. We have expressed the actions in the form of affirmations that show the type of educators we are becoming on a consistent basis. The affirmations are specific, observable commitments that we are making to our school community. (Note: Each set of affirmations has been cross-referenced to Alberta Education’s Teaching Quality Standard.) In sum, what follows is “our essence as teachers” in Wild Rose Public Schools.

Lyle Lorenz (Lorenz Consulting) and a committee of individuals from Wild Rose Public Schools have drafted *The Shared Vision of Exemplary Teaching Construct* to be shared with all educators for feedback in the upcoming months. Members of the committee who need to be thanked and recognized for their contributions are:

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