

Derek Begay

EDUCATION/LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- In your bios you stated that you want to put emphasis on reforming schools. Can you give examples of the reforms you've helped other schools with?
- What COVID-19 measures will you put in place? Will you be committed to going back to virtual learning, if necessary?
- What experience have you had with student who have experienced trauma and need to finish high school or obtain their GED?
- What is your experience with managing a Special Education program?
- How do you propose to retain quality care for children when faced with sometimes high staff turnover rates?
- What major challenges and problems did you face at your last position?
- Did your school meet and/or exceed standardized test proficiency?
- Has your school made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)? Please explain.
- What do you think of Montessori teachings? Would you implement any as superintendent? Please explain.
- What are your thoughts on the Cambridge international curriculum?
- What are your thoughts on the Charlotte Mason method?

My educational philosophy revolves around two main priorities which help guide the focus and decisions made for student learning and student safety. With that said, as a leader and team we will make critical decisions based on the safety of returning to school or continuing virtual learning. There are many learning models that can be supplemental programs to assist in teaching specific skills for our students. I have experience with utilizing various programs such as, but not limited to the following: International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, Pearson, Read 180 and System 44, and many more. With student learning and student safety as the priorities, support from all stakeholders is important and will enforce our mission, to educate each and every student.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- What can you tell me about Head Start, its framework, and what it's designed to do for children and families?
- What is your knowledge and experience with early childhood education and how will you show that you believe and support the education of our youngest children?
- What is the difference between a public preschool and Head Start?
- Describe your experience working with *tribal* Head Start programs.
- As superintendent, how will you provide guidance and resources so that Salt River Schools and our Education Board is more knowledgeable about Head Start, its standards, and the purpose of the program?
- What do you know about early brain development and how that impacts student success?
- How will you address child/family trauma in early childhood education?

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My experience with early childhood education includes knowledge of the Family and Child Education (FACE) program, working with local tribal Head Start programs, and attending conferences and trainings of the development of young children, Birth to Three-year-old conferences, and overseeing new methods and strategies for young learners. I helped a FACE program go from 4 years of probationary status to good standing in my first year as a Principal. Our team worked with local Head Starts to build continuity and combine resources to help our young students with expectations as they entered our kindergarten classes. Working with our community, families, and schools will help share information and resources to better prepare our young students with learning in the home especially in those critical early years as children are developing and growing.

STUDENTS & FAMILIES

- What is your experience with families in poverty? Families experiencing trauma? How does that experience effect your professional work?
- What are your perspectives and viewpoints on discipline or challenging behaviors?
- How do you include struggling students in school improvement?
- How do you plan to incorporate the students' input in your planning as superintendent? Will it be a one-time input or will you continuously meet with the students you serve?
- How have you improved parent involvement?

Student input is a vital aspect to growing and developing a school and its capacities. Student surveys help provide key information of the current state of our schools, teachers, learning styles, and resources being utilized. With this feedback and ongoing communication our team can modify and prioritize needs from students, who should be the priority and voice their needs. One size fits all approaches are ineffective to meet the needs of every student. As an educational institution we need to ensure there are many opportunities for every student, which could include the following pathways: Attending colleges/universities, trade schools, joining the military, developing job training, learning life skills, and understanding financial literacy.

STAFF

- How will you hold principals, leaders, and staff accountable to student achievement?
- How do you encourage 300+ staff and let them know you see them?
- How you will communicate with all staff?

Communication is important with all stakeholders. Two of the most important components in an organization is the ability to ensure all members know the mission and vision of the organization and communicating the impact each individual has towards the implementation of the mission and vision. An important part of a school is accountability and compliance. Accountability is needed and is often taken as a negative when any staff member is moved, reassigned, or removed. However, the need for student learning is what our responsibility is

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and sometimes we as leaders have to make those difficult decisions, but our intentions are and should always focus on student learning and success.

CULTURE & LANGUAGE

- What is your knowledge of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community as it relates to education and our commitment to community and culture?
- Have you improved a school with high (more than 10%) Native American student populations?
- What is your experiencing incorporating Native American language and culture into curriculum and student activities?

I have worked with several schools with the majority of students coming from Native American backgrounds and multiple languages represented within those schools. Approaching the implementation of each language and cultural teachings starts with three key factors: 1) respect, 2) understanding, and 3) knowledge. It is important to respect the language and cultural norms of every people. Once that respect is understood, a clear understanding of how to approach teaching language and cultural components is attainable. Relying on those who know the language and culture will be the experts in ensuring a student has the necessary skills and knowledge to learn. The approach is vital to sustaining a tribe's identity and will ensure the next seven generations continue to relay those important cultural and language components.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Name three books that have influenced you the most?
- What do you think is the most important social issue impacting our society today? What are your suggestions for addressing this issue within education systems?
- What question do you wish we had asked you?

Three books that have influenced me are: 1) Red Letter Christians, 2) Make Gentle the Life of This World, and 3) 1491. Each book is a piece of who I am and how I value the aspects of my life. Equality is of the utmost importance in society today. There are many movements, each of which focuses on the equity of a person whether they be Asian American, African American, Hispanic, Native American, or any other minority. Educating our students with the notion of equality will create a generation of students who are "woke"/knowledgeable of other cultures and respect them, as we would want our cultures to be respected. I would have liked to hear this question, and perhaps one day will: "What can I/We do to help with educating our youth?"