

Q1 - Inclusion

As a young man, WA struggled with learning processes, comprehension, ADHD, and had great teachers who helped him along. His middle middle child has adhd/learning disability, understands what it means to have to fight with a school district to get services for a child.

Professionally, WA was a special education teacher for people from 3yrs to 65yrs, and an ESE director. Masters in Special Ed. WA brings all that mixture to the inclusionary model.

Inclusion is centered on gen ed population and what they do in that program. Move gen ed forward by prioritizing the needs of spec ed student first.

Understands that inclusion is an equality thing, and that the starting place is inclusion and it should not be compromised as a result of budget, staff or training. He also understands that some students benefit more from pull out or a continuum of services, chosen by the IEP team, with heavy participation from parents.

He looks at what the personalized learning needs for each child are, and focuses on education training for staff.

Follow the tiered interventions - but with a focus on gen ed teachers being prepared (usually the greatest weakness and hindrance to inclusion model).

He's big on investing, preparing and training everyone.

He asked, why would resources not be a priority - it is a recipe for failure.

Said he would keep Pilot programs in place, and has used them extensively in any area where he wants to see quick improvement. Says that in any district, nothing ever moves as quickly as you want. Successful techniques is a pilot program and communicating successes to stakeholders, including parents.

Gave an example of same sex 5th grade classes, piloted, took a look at research, when it was successful, increased buyin.

Q2. Communication - he spends a lot of time meeting with advisory group leaders, having ideas and sharing those ideas with others for buy in, and generally being out in the community. Stressed that this is a 24/7 job. Mentioned that he even will go out to stores, mentioned a WalMart, and randomly asked people about the school district.

Need to start a gifted center for kids.

Magnet schools best kids/teachers - SE services were disastrous.

Key piece to a district's success is special education - he transformed special education in Hernando county (spring hill) parents bombarding for SE services, IEPs not being followed, teachers not being trained. Said he was a one man wrecking crew on ESE, overhauled the entire program and met needs of SE kids in one year.

Earned an "A" district grade in the first year bc of communication with stakeholders. Highlighting successes. Utilizing reporters about successes.

Created flagship programs - increased teaching and learning standards, by getting community involvement, biz involvement.

Q2 - Retaliation/Q3 Training

Would insist on ESE director reporting directly to Supt. Returning phone calls every day, being open, w 30 schools he was stretched, 10 are perfect. Had issues, shared in a respectful way.

Bottom line: you need to treat others the way we want to be treated. No room in this world to treat people that way - would need to know what's going on.

Mentioned that he is very hands on, he's in the schools all the time, meeting with all staff.

Set an example, keep everyone accountable to expectation.

Build on FL mandatory leadership training to improve skills.

Mentioned the need to provide training and support to professional because you need to be on your best at all times bc right to work, no job security. Must always have the team improving and growing, has only dismissed folks who could not get a job done after receiving every support/resource possible.

Transparency is super important. In Hernando when he got there were only as transparent as required by law. Had a \$440mm budget -- was a big secret. Said they were not going to do that any more, be transparent, have citizens know where tax dollars go. If open an honest about process, doesn't lead to all the uncomfortable questions.

Leadership training - had 80 admins in Hernando, was an "A" District. He gets to know leaders. Puts all leader in the "right" seat based on strengths. In his 1st year moved 28 people, shook things up - but staff was thanking him because they had an opportunity to grow, and performed better in jobs more suited for them.

Hernando - Worked with ESE community - want to be in the situation where people - Need to know their kids -

Wendt from a “C” to an “A” district.

In a short period of time, added electrical engineering programs, journalism programs, int'l biz programs, dual language programs, always saw the addition of programs from an ESE perspective, what were the different options to make kids receiving ESE services successful in life..